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ABSTRACT

This handbook accompanies the 33-hour literacy tutor and instructor training and certification workshop program. Chapters 1-3 provide information on reading, writing, and math and teaching and learning strategies. Chapter 4 focuses on determining adults' needs. Chapter 5 outlines four levels suitable for people working to improve reading, writing, and math skills up to a Grade 9 or pre-General Educational Development program level. Each level--A, B, C, and D--includes suggested learning materials, activities, and outcomes. Chapter 6 discusses determining a person's reading strategies through informal assessment and lists guidelines for assessing adult literacy materials. Chapter 7 describes determining a person's writing strategies through informal assessment and improving writing. Chapters 8 and 9 provide information on teaching and learning spelling and grammar. Chapter 10 discusses planning each session, including setting goals, developing a lesson plan, and measuring progress. Chapters 11 and 12 offer suggestions for facing learning blocks and working with groups. An appended activities section contains activities for adult literacy students. A general description of how to do the activity is followed by questions and answers to clarify who will benefit, what strategies and skills are being developed, how to handle problems, how to use the activities with groups and individuals, and how to use the activity with people working at each of the four levels. Samples are provided. (YLB)

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Introduction

This handbook accompanies the 33-hour tutor and instructor training and certification workshop program developed by the Literacy Division, Nova Scotia Department of Advanced Education and Job Training.

The program developers, Meredith Hutchings and Phil Davison, field tested the training program and the handbook in a number of communities and program settings around the province. Many of the ideas and activities outlined in this handbook were shared by tutors, instructors, teachers, adult learners and adult educators during the field tests and during the development of the training program.

This program responds to a specific need

The research report, Adult literacy, basic education and academic upgrading in Nova Scotia: The role of the Community College, outlined eight recommendations.

One of these recommendations, **training and professional development**, pointed to the need for a core training program that would provide "...practical training and professional development for adult educators involved in literacy, basic education and academic upgrading in the province."

This recommendation responded to a need voiced by tutors and instructors in the Literacy in Nova Scotia Survey, developed as part of the research report. When tutors, instructors and teachers were asked, as part of this survey, "What help do you need to work well with your program or class?", their top two priorities were better books and a more comprehensive training program.

The 33-hour training program and the handbook were developed to meet the training need. The program introduces adult education principles, practices and resources and aims to help tutors and instructors develop:

- a realization of the wide variety of learning styles and teaching methods
- an awareness of the range of materials currently available for adult literacy, basic education and academic upgrading
- a practical introduction to how adults can develop their reading, writing and math skills at different levels
- an understanding of the need for co-ordination with other services in the community

This program is based upon a particular understanding of literacy

Literacy is socially constructed

Literacy for one person is not literacy for another. Being literate depends upon what you need or want at a specific point in time. In this sense, literacy is a social construction.

Everyone who comes to a literacy/upgrading program is there for a different reason. Some are uncomfortable with the reading and writing tasks they must do at work. Others want to improve their reading, writing and math skills so they can help their children with school work. These reasons – wants and needs – for improving reading, writing and math are all valid and must be considered by tutors, instructors and teachers when they plan learning sessions.

The training program uses the definition developed in the research report:

> *"People are literate when they can do the reading, writing and math that they want or need to do in order to get on with the rest of their lives."*

Literacy is not something people either have or do not have

Literacy goes beyond the popular notion of someone who cannot read or write. It extends across the educational spectrum and is different from place to place. It is not something people have or do not have. The need to upgrade skills is a part of a lifelong learning continuum. It is not something that is suddenly completed.

Literacy is built and sharpened through relevant activities

Programs should build upon people's own language and experiences. Research shows that people learn best when tutors and instructors begin to teach reading and writing skills through relevant reading and writing activities rather than through imposed curriculum materials. Learning works best when reading, writing and math skills are taught within the context of their use and function.

Literacy instruction should be specific to the context

Programs should be structured in such a way so that people identify their own wants and needs. These wants and needs are identified through activities that allow people to express and then work through their fears, hopes, attitudes and opinions. In this way, the personal and community context forms the basis of the curriculum.

Programs should provide tutors and instructors with a framework for developing and evaluating a curriculum that is based on an adult student's needs and wants.

Literacy instruction should consider the barriers adult students face when learning

People who come to a program to improve their reading, writing and math skills face barriers to learning. These barriers, be they physical, social, economical, cultural, racial, financial or educational, affect learning. Tutors, teachers, instructors and administrators need to recognize these barriers and discuss them with their students. Understanding the barriers adults face when learning is just as important as knowing how adults learn.

Literacy instruction is not a charitable activity

People who come to a program to improve their reading, writing and math skills are not there because they want pity or because they need to be "brought out of the darkness." They are there because they want or need to improve their reading, writing and math skills.

Definition of terms

People who come to programs to improve their reading, writing and math skills are referred to in several different ways in the handbook.

- in the reading chapter they are readers
- in the writing chapter they are writers
- in the rest of the handbook they are learners or students.

People who work as volunteers in programs are referred to as tutors.

People who work as paid staff in programs are referred to as instructors or teachers.

Chapter 1

Some Things That Are Known About Reading

What do adults mean when they say they have a reading problem?

People who come to a program to improve their reading skills will describe their reading problems in very different ways.

"I don't get every word when I read."

"I can't figure out long words."

"I can't read certain forms that I need to read for my work."

"I can't sound out words."

"I don't recognize all the letters in words."

"I just don't understand what I've read. I can read it OK, but after I'm finished, I can't remember what it was all about."

These people all have different ideas about what it takes to be a good reader. Some think that good readers are able to read every single word on a page. Some think that they need to know how to sound out all the letters and all the words. Others think that they need to be able to read and easily understand every kind of printed document in order to be considered a fluent reader.

- Are these ideas correct? Do you have to know all the letters, all the sounds, all the words, **and** understand all the ideas to qualify as a reader?
- Just what does it take to be literate anyway? How do people know when they are fluent readers?

1. What is fluent reading?

In the last ten or fifteen years, people involved in reading research have taken a new approach as they try to figure out what the key ingredients are for literacy. Rather than looking at what **non-fluent** readers do **not** do when they read, researchers are analyzing what **fluent** readers **do** when they read.

To get a feeling for this research, try the following activity.

1. Read the paragraph, *Maintaining a Consistent Light Source*, below. You can do this with a friend or by yourself, using a tape recorder.
2. As you read, try to be aware of what you are doing. Notice what strategies you use to understand the text. Your friend can assist you in recording this information.
3. When you are finished, list the ways or strategies that you used to make sense of what you were reading. These strategies are what help make you a fluent reader.

Maintaining a Consistent Light Source

There is a very clear relationship in the carbon arc lamphouse between a clean, consistent light and the coefficient of resistance in the electric arc. In fact, it is well known that the electric arc has a negative coefficient of resistance. As a result it does not, in its volt-ampere characteristic, adhere to Ohm's law. Instead it does just the opposite. That is, as the current is increased, the voltage in the arc decreases, with the probable effect that the light will "snap out". Probably, that is, unless the arc voltage is stabilized through the introduction of ballast in the form of resistance in the circuit. The actual arc voltage is further affected by factors that would not, in normal circumstances, be the cause of discernable voltage fluctuations. One further advantage of placing a ballast in the circuit is the limit it places on current flow (which might otherwise be very great) when the carbons are initially struck. It is therefore imperative that a ballast be a part of the completed circuit. After that, it is to be expected that the voltage supplied (by direct current from company mains or, if service is AC, through a rectifier or motor generator set) will be a constant value. Most often that absolute value is set between 85 and 115 volts. Clearly the adjustments to the rheostat must take this number, as well as several other factors, into consideration.

Compare your list to the following strategies researchers have found that fluent readers use.

> **Skim** the whole passage quickly to get an idea of what it is about and then reread it more slowly.
>
> **Move along** unless something doesn't make sense or sound right. Reread these parts.
>
> **Read ahead** and then reread any part you may have difficulty understanding.
>
> **Skip** difficult areas completely.
>
> **Substitute** a word or several words for an unfamiliar word or phrase that keeps the meaning of the passage.
>
> **Sound out** words or look for familiar parts of words while trying to think of what the passage means.

1.1 Fluent readers solve problems well

Fluent readers choose reading materials because they want or need to understand what the materials mean. They select the kind and type of material depending upon their purposes and reasons for reading.

No matter what kind of material is chosen, fluent readers consistently approach reading in a similar way. They consider reading as a series of problems that needs to be solved. The main problem is, "What does this passage mean? What is this author trying to say?"

When they read, fluent readers try to figure out what the passage means. This process of reading for meaning involves four main strategies:

- predicting and confirming
- taking risks, understanding reading as trial and error
- sampling print
- selecting reading strategies depending upon what is effective

Predicting and confirming

Fluent readers predict what will come next based on their background knowledge of the topic and what they have already read.

If a topic is familiar, predictions about what the material will say are easier to make. Readers confirm these predictions as they read by reading ahead to get an idea of what is coming up next. They also reread passages which do not make sense in order to make new predictions and confirmations.

Taking risks, understanding reading as trial and error

Fluent readers are willing to take risks and make mistakes. They do not get upset if they don't read every word exactly as it appears in the text or if things don't make sense the first time. They don't stop reading just because they don't recognize a word.

They may substitute different words and phrases until they feel they do understand what they are reading. Each time they try to understand the text, they decide if they have made a mistake and need to continue. This trial and error method requires the ability to take risks and to make some predictions about what the text is going to say.

Sampling print

Fluent readers sample print – they don't look at every single mark on the page. This process is similar to a buffet lunch. First people scan the whole table to see the kinds of dishes that are available, then they decide which ones they will sample. The same thing happens when fluent readers look at print. They quickly scan the possibilities until something catches their attention. Then parts of the text are read or sampled. Other parts are only briefly examined. In this way, fluent readers choose reading material or parts of reading material to read.

Selecting reading strategies depending upon what is effective

Fluent readers select different reading strategies depending upon what they need to know from the reading material. They may select a different reading speed for different materials, for example:

skimming a newspaper

scanning a table of contents

studying a mechanics manual for thorough understanding

Selection of a reading strategy is not necessarily a conscious act, but is often done automatically. Like other actions or habits which are repeated frequently, it becomes effortless.

Note:

Fluent readers may make up possible meanings for words and phrases and use these meanings as long as they make sense in the text. Constant referral to a dictionary is not always necessary or convenient for everyday reading.

1.2 Fluent Readers Use Three Cueing Systems

Fluent readers focus their attention on three different kinds of clues, or **cueing systems,** when they read. They use:

- grapho-phonemic cues (letter/sound relationships)
- syntactic cues (knowledge of language)
- semantic cues (context)

Grapho-phonemic cues

When readers use **phonemic cues,** they concentrate on the sounds and letters in a word. Usually this means that they look at each letter, match it to the sound they think it makes and then try to blend a series of sounds together until a word can be identified. This is commonly known as "phonics."

Readers may also take a guess at a word based upon what it looks like. Readers may notice that the beginning, end or middle of a word reminds them of another word which looks similar. They use this visual or **graphic** information to help them identify the word.

Syntactic cues

Readers are also speakers who have been using their language for a long time. They know how it is structured. This is referred to as the syntactic or grammatical knowledge that readers have. When they read, fluent readers ask, "Does this sound right?"

Most readers know that nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs appear in a certain order in a sentence. Even if they don't know these grammatical terms, they will often substitute a word from the same grammatical category – a noun for a noun, a verb for a verb, and so on, for an unknown word in the sentence. For example, they may substitute "house" for "home" or "hot" for "warm".

Semantic cues

Readers who use semantic cues concentrate on reading for meaning. When they read, they ask, "Does this make sense?" In order to understand what the author is saying, they think about what they know about the subject. They bring their own experiences and knowledge to the text.

1.3 Non-Fluent Readers Often Try To Solve The Wrong Problems

Non-fluent readers often get caught up asking questions about single letters in a word or single words in a sentence. They tend to overuse the grapho-phonemic cueing system.

They often ask:

- What is this letter? What sound does this letter make?
- What word is this?

This is not to suggest that readers should not use the grapho-phonemic system. Fluent readers often use grapho-phonemic cues when they read, but always in conjunction with semantic and syntactic cues.

For example, when reading a car owner's manual, fluent readers may come across a complicated part name. To help them read and understand the unknown word, they often read ahead and then reread the section – essentially reading around the word so that they can determine what the word means. They may then try to sound out the word, or recognize parts of the word which are related to other car parts that are familiar. In this case they use all three cueing systems.

Non-fluent readers often find it difficult to use all of these strategies. They often think that a good reader is someone who knows all the words on the page, not someone who reads ahead, re-reads and makes substitutions for unknown words. Tutors, instructors and teachers need to help readers identify their reading strategies.

2. Identifying Reading Strategies

As tutors, instructors and teachers we need to figure out what strategies people are using when they read. We need to encourage the strategies that work most effectively and that people feel most comfortable using.

An effective way to discover what kinds of reading strategies are being used is to:

- Ask readers to choose a book or booklet which they think they can read, but have not read before. It should be short, but complete and of interest to the reader.There should be some parts which are a little difficult – but not so many that they have to stop in complete confusion.
- Ask readers to read aloud from the material. If they get stuck, try not to help them. If they get frustrated say, "Just do what you usually do when you run into something difficult." If they get **really** frustrated, ask them to skip that passage or help them out.
- Tape the reading so that you don't miss any of the reading strategies. Explain that the process will help both you and them decide on their reading strengths and weaknesses. Tape the reading only if the readers give permission and if they feel comfortable doing so.
- Ask them to tell you about what they have read. Let them know that you want them to retell the story **before** they start to read.

2.1 How to mark reading strategies

In order to analyze readers' reading strategies, you need to identify their miscues. A miscue is any change from the actual words in the text. What follows is an explanation of how to conduct a simplified miscue analysis. Two examples are provided at the end of this chapter.

There are different kinds of miscues. As readers read, or as you listen to the tape, mark any changes (miscues) on your copy of the text as follows.

Omissions

- Mark by circling the omitted words.

Substitutions

- Mark by printing the substitutions above the word. If more than one substitution is made for the same word, write them all down.

Additions

- Mark by inserting added words or sounds with a ^.

Repetitions

- Mark by underlining any words or phrases which are repeated.

Corrections

- Mark by underlining and placing a "c" under any words or phrases which are corrected (_____c).

2.2 How to analyze reading strategies

Sit down by yourself or with the readers to examine the marked passage and determine the reading strategies used.

What happened when the readers had difficulty?

- Did they try to sound out words (phonemic strategy) or try to match the word with one which looked similar (graphic strategy)?
- Did they try to substitute a word because it fit into the sentence structure (syntactic strategy)?
- Did they try to make the text make sense (semantic strategy)?

Readers who make many substitutions based on what the words look or sound like are relying solely upon grapho-phonemic strategies.

Readers who make substitutions based on their knowledge of language are using syntactic strategies.

Readers who make substitutions based upon context are using semantic strategies.

To help understand what people are doing when they read, ask the following questions:

- What strategies have been tried? Were they successful?
- Were readers trying to predict what was coming next? Did they check these predictions by reading ahead and then rereading the passage?
- Did they take risks and try a variety of strategies?
- Did they sample print by flipping through the pages or by glancing ahead?

If readers repeat a difficult passage several times concentrating on each letter and sound and do not understand what they have read, it may show that they simply don't know what strategy to use.

If they repeat a passage to correct a miscue that didn't make sense or didn't fit the sentence structure, this shows that they are trying to make sense of what they are reading.

2.3 How to determine what people understand

Listen as readers tell what they recall about the passage they have read. Make notes about what kinds of information and details they remember. Be persistent to draw out information and ideas that they may have gotten from the text, but don't lead them on to tell things.

Keep the retelling open-ended. Ask, "What else do you recall? Can you tell me more about the _____ ?"

Retelling is the most important single source of information in this oral reading process. Much can be learned about what the reader focuses on when reading.

Does the reader:

- recall details and recognize the main idea?
- recognize the sequence and order of events?
- recognize cause (why it happened) and effect (what happened)?
- express opinions about what has been read and give reasons for these opinions?
- read between the lines to make inferences about what the writer is saying?

Use the reading assessment chart in Chapter 6, *Retelling to Show Comprehension*, to record your discussions.

Some people may make many miscues and sound as if they are having a difficult time reading a text but, when they are asked to retell what they have read, they are able to tell you a lot about the text.

2.4 How to discuss reading strategies with the reader

Tutors and instructors need to discuss the results of the oral reading process with the reader. Being able to read is not a mystical process. By involving the adult learner in this discussion, reading starts to shed its mystical nature and takes on a more concrete, relevant form.

Explain how doing a miscue analysis periodically is a good way to record reading progress. These discussions can help readers work with tutors to develop individual and group plans for improving reading strategies.

3. Making reading easier

One way to help readers develop effective reading strategies is to help them feel successful with the reading they are currently able to do. It will be much easier to reinforce positive strategies if readers have the opportunity to use these strategies when they are reading. If readers are making a lot of miscues, it is difficult to focus on anything except the miscues.

To help readers read successfully, do the following:

- Make sure readers have access to material that interests them. Beginnning readers can only make effective predictions when they are familiar with the material or topic.
- Discuss the text before, during and after reading.

  Before reading, look through the text. Look at any illustrations or photos. Read several lines from the text. Ask readers what they think the story is about.

  During reading, ask comprehension questions. For example, "Does what we've read so far fit with what we predicted the story would be about?" If not, discuss what has been read and make predictions on what will happen next.

  After reading, ask readers to retell what they read. Discuss predictions made and strategies used. Later, you may want to read the story again.

These discussions will enable readers to make more effective predictions and substitutions.

- Use techniques such as assisted reading (see *Assisted Reading* in the Activities Section).
- Make sure the material is clearly designed. Books should have upper and lower case type, provide lots of white space around the text, be double-spaced and have visual clues (i.e. pictures, drawings).

  This type of material is easier to read than material which uses all upper case lettering, has little white space and includes few visual clues. It is often possible to adapt material by cutting and pasting or by using a photocopier to enlarge the type.

Remember – a reader is a user of written language

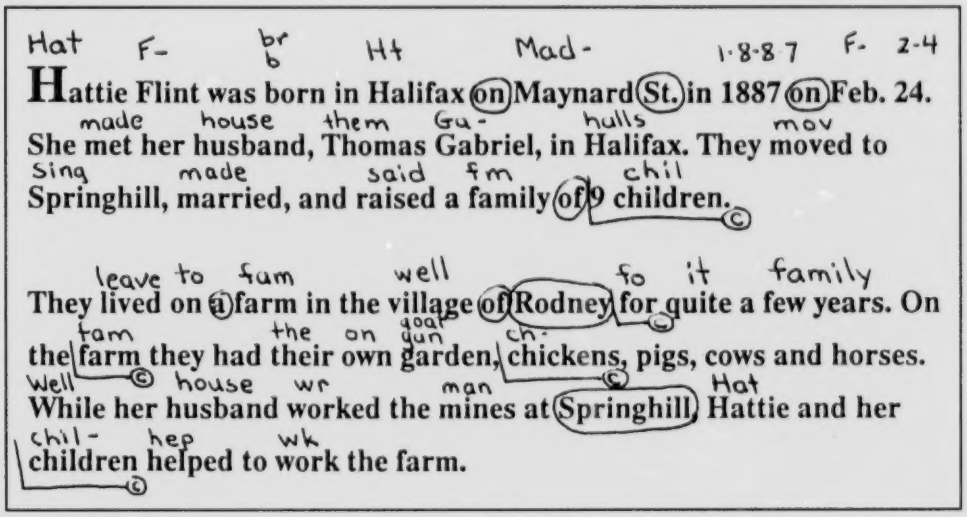
People don't want to read simply to identify the words, letters or sounds on the page. They want to find out about the ideas – how to do certain jobs, how other people think about certain topics, what is going on in their community and around the world. In this way they are using language to get information. They are a user of written language.

And – reading improves through reading

It's as simple and as difficult as that.

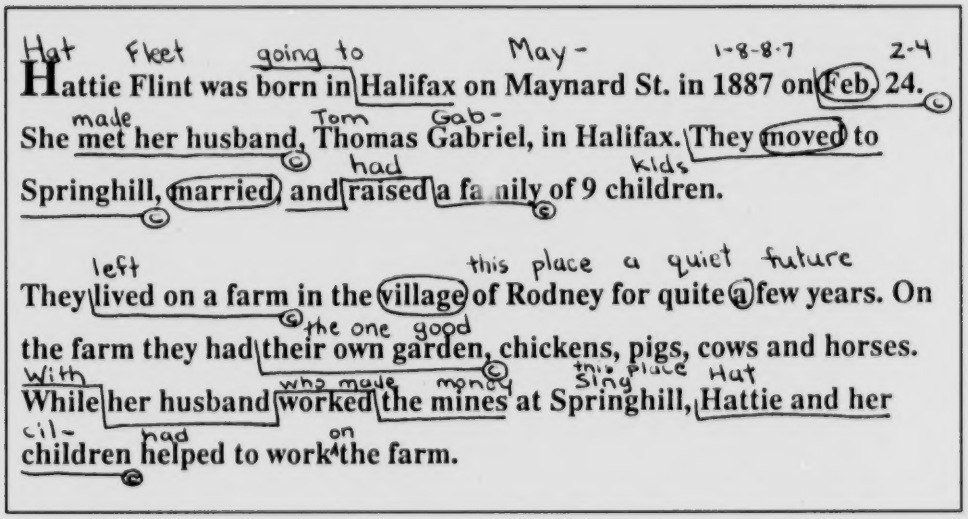
Miscue Analysis Example One

This reader relies solely on grapho-phonemic cues to determine what the text is saying. She tends to sound out and substitute words which look similar. She does not try to read for meaning. This makes it difficult for her to make sense of what she reads.


Hattie Flint was born in Halifax on Maynard St. in 1887 on Feb. 24.
She met her husband, Thomas Gabriel, in Halifax. They moved to
Springhill, married, and raised a family of 9 children.
They lived on a farm in the village of Rodney for quite a few years. On
the farm they had their own garden, chickens, pigs, cows and horses.
While her husband worked the mines at Springhill, Hattie and her
children helped to work the farm.

Miscue Analysis Example Two

This reader uses a variety of reading strategies. She sounds out words while thinking of what word would make sense in the passage. When something doesn't make sense, she reads on and then rereads and corrects the difficult part. She substitutes words that fit the context.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the farm they had their own garden, chickens, pigs, cows and horses.
While her husband worked the mines at Springhill, Hattie and her
children helped to work the farm.

Chapter 2

Some Things That Are Known About Writing

What do adults mean when they say they have a writing problem?

People who come to a program to improve their writing skills will describe their writing problems in different ways.

> *"I hope you can read my writing. The letters aren't made just right."*
>
> *"My spelling is the main problem. I just can't remember all those words."*
>
> *"I know what I want to say, but I can't get the words out the right way."*
>
> *"I don't even know where to begin so I just don't write anything down."*
>
> *"At work, I freeze up when my boss asks me to write a report. If I have enough time I can write up something, but if I have to do it under pressure, I just fall apart."*
>
> *"I write OK I guess, but I sure wouldn't send any invitations to the Prime Minister. I'm never sure that I've said it just right – that all the t's are crossed, and the commas are in the right place."*

These people have specific ideas about what it takes to be a good writer.

Some think that good writing requires perfect handwriting and spelling. Their views may have been shaped by years of public school education where neatness and perfect spelling were highly praised features of written assignments.

Some think that writing should be an easy process. They may find it difficult to express their ideas on paper. They may not have needed to write for a number of years or have avoided writing altogether. Excuses such as, "Could you help me fill this out please? I forgot my glasses." may have been used to avoid writing.

Others think that you should be able to write under pressure even at work. They may find it difficult to write at work. They may feel that their writing "problem" will be discovered by their boss or other employees when they write.

- Are these ideas correct? Does your handwriting have to be perfect to be considered a good writer? Do good writers know how to spell all the words correctly?
- How do you get your ideas down on paper the way you want?
- What does it take to be a fluent writer?

1. What is fluent writing?

In the same way that reading researchers start with fluent readers to analyze the reading process, writing researchers have asked fluent writers how they approach the writing process. By doing this, they hope to understand what basic strategies are required and how writers work with these strategies. What are the strategies for fluent writing?

To get a feeling for this research, try the following activity.

1. Write a short passage about what you hope to accomplish through your involvement with adult education.
2. Consider that your passage will be published in the next issue of your local newspaper.
3. When you are finished, list the steps you took
    - before writing
    - during writing
    - after writing

Compare your list with the following strategies that researchers have found that fluent writers use.

Before writing

- think about audience
- think about content
- brainstorm ideas
- organize ideas

During writing

- think about audience
- think about content
- write rough draft based upon brainstorm and organization
- revise draft – add or delete ideas

After writing

- revise draft – add or delete ideas
- edit draft – check spelling, punctuation, grammar
- produce final copy

1.1 Fluent writers think about their audience

When we write, we think about who will read our writing. This applies to every occasion. Even if the finished text is a short note to our child's teacher or a memo on the fridge door, we begin by thinking about who will read the writing and what ideas we need to convey.

Our purpose for writing affects the tone and content. A letter to a friend will be written in a different manner than a covering letter for a resume.

Consider, for example, the writing you did during the past week. You may have written cheques, notes or memos. You may have filled out a report or an application form. Perhaps you wrote a letter to a friend. For you, writing may be simply a tool. You use this tool to complete each writing task for a different purpose and a different audience.

1.2 Fluent writers read like writers and write like readers

Just as fluent readers tend to use a variety of reading strategies, fluent writers make appropriate decisions about what kind of information and organization each piece of writing will have.

Researchers have found that this is a result of fluent writers reading like writers and writing like readers.

This means that writers are also readers. They learn what writing should look and sound like by watching what other writers do. Consider two everyday writing examples.

- You've received letters from several friends. You decide it's time to reply. You read through their letters several times, noticing the tone, content and organization. You then think about what information you want to include in your reply letters. You may even write down a few notes to guide you when you write the letters. Finally, you write a reply based upon all this information.
- You are expected to write up the minutes for a committee meeting, but you've never written minutes before. Even if you are comfortable with writing, you will probably ask a trusted friend to read it over before anyone else sees it.

In each case you may switch from being

The writer – What do I want to say? Does this make any sense to me?
to **the reader –** What does this say? To whom am I writing? Fluent writers do this no matter how short or informal the piece of writing.

We also learn about writing by talking through what we want to say. Imagine a time when you were writing a project for school. You may have thought, "I don't know how to start this project! What should I say about the lumbering industry?" And so a series of questions and answers, beginnings and endings carried the pencil to the bottom of the page and to the final piecing together of the finished product. This was probably a frustrating and difficult process but, with any luck, you have become more comfortable with how and what to write.

Reading and writing need to go together

Beginning or hesitant writers may not feel comfortable with reading and writing and often tend to view these skills as two very different tasks. Traditional school curriculums may have reinforced this idea by treating reading, writing and spelling as different subject areas. Tutors, instructors and teachers need to present reading and writing as related tasks, not as separate subject areas.

In the previous chapter, fluent reading was said to involve the ability to predict what the author is saying. These prediction skills can be developed by reading and discussing what has been read. Predicting what writers and authors might say about a topic can also be developed by writing about the same topic and trying to decide what ideas to put next.

1.3 Fluent writers compose and then organize their ideas

Return to the list of steps that you took to write the article for the newspaper.

You probably thought about the topic, organized your thoughts and, if given time for publishing, you edited the text for spelling, grammar and punctuation. All writers need to organize their thoughts as they prepare to write. Everyone must figure out the basics – what will be included and in what order. Fluent writers do this by composing or brainstorming their thoughts and ideas about a topic and then organizing them.

We brainstorm and organize in many different ways. Some people write a list of headings, words or phrases. They use this list to organize their thoughts into categories. They may number their list to figure out where to begin writing. Other people use brainstorming or "mapping" to get their ideas down on paper (See *Brainstorming* in the Activities Section). These brainstorms or maps are then used to organize their thoughts and to help them figure out where to begin.

Once the basic content is organized, writers start to shape their ideas.

1.4 Fluent writers solve problems

As we write, we encounter different problems. We spend time trying to organize our ideas. We may wonder how the reader will react to the text. We may worry about correct spelling, grammar usage and punctuation.

Although fluent writers address these concerns in varying order, they tend to follow a writing process.

- first they **brainstorm** the ideas
- then they **organize** these ideas
- then they **write** a rough draft
- then they **revise** the draft by adding, deleting or rearranging words, phrases and ideas. Friends may read this draft and provide helpful ideas.
- then they **edit** the draft to make sure that the spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct
- finally, they **produce** a finished copy which is neatly written or typed

As we become more comfortable with writing, we often compress these steps by making revisions and editing as we write. However, if we know that someone else is going to read what we've written, we will probably write several copies – revising and editing each one.

Beginning writers often try to solve the wrong problems

As noted in the previous chapter, non-fluent readers often try to read perfectly, while neglecting the more important task of figuring out what the text means.

In much the same way, non-fluent writers often worry about spelling, punctuation or handwriting at the same time that they are trying to get their ideas down on paper. This often prevents them from writing at all. They will be more successful with writing if they focus on content first and on language mechanics second.

2. Making writing easier

Instructors and tutors need to help beginning writers understand the writing process. Beginning writers need to be taken through the steps that fluent writers go through. If this process is repeated again and again, they may start to follow the steps as automatically and internally as fluent writers do. The writing process will become a natural activity. As one beginning writer put it, "The writing seems to jump from off my pen now!"

To help writers improve their writing, try the following:

- Explain the steps in the writing process. You can write these down on a cue card or in a personal dictionary (see *Personal Dictionary* in the Activities Section) for easy reference. When working on a long piece of writing, have writers refer to the steps until they follow them independently.
- Use scrap paper to write rough and first drafts. This allows writers the freedom to make mistakes and try out ideas.
- Talk about writers' ideas. As you discuss the ideas, writers will begin to feel comfortable that what they are putting down is OK and acceptable to others.
- Compare writing completed to other pieces of writing. Look for organization in other writing (see *Text Organization* in the Activities Section).
- Write for a purpose. Ask people when they need to write and then write for that purpose. People who are not comfortable writing need to know that writing is a communication tool that can be used to share and receive information.
- Write in a variety of forms, including notes, letters, reports, lists, poetry and stories.
- Teach learners to find and correct spelling and punctuation errors. Many fluent writers are not expert spellers, but they can correctly identify which words are misspelled in their writing. They can then find the correct spelling by looking for the word in other printed material, by looking up the word in a dictionary, or by asking someone.

Remember – a writer is a person who shares ideas and information

People don't write simply to spell correctly or to show off their handwriting. They write in order to pass on information or ideas to others or themselves. If program participants write for real reasons, from the very first session, they will see how they can use writing for their own purposes.

And – writing improves through writing

It's as simple and as difficult as that.

Chapter 3

Some Things That Are Known About Math

What do adults mean when they say they have trouble with math?

People who come to a program to improve their math skills will describe their math problems in very different ways.

"I didn't do well in math when I was in school."

"I don't understand new math."

"I can add and subtract but that's about it when it comes to math."

"I have trouble figuring out my bills."

"I have trouble measuring things at work."

"I don't understand the metric system."

For many people, mathematics is a mystery subject that was left behind in school. Some people have unpleasant memories of math assignments and tests. Others may not feel comfortable with the so-called "new" math. Some may not have the math skills necessary to complete everyday tasks at home. Others may not have the math skills necessary to complete tasks at work.

Mathematics is an area that many shy away from even though it forms an integral part of their daily living.

1. Why do people have trouble with math?

Many people have a fear of mathematics. Some people refer to this fear as math anxiety. Math anxiety is often the result of past school experiences and, in some cases, a misunderstanding of what doing math means.

There are a number of reasons why people have trouble with math.

1.1 Math is system different from language

There are several important differences between reading and writing a text containing only letters and reading and writing a text containing mathematical information.

Math vocabulary may have a different meaning

Many of the words used in mathematics have meanings different from when they occur in a text. Consider, for example, the mathematical meanings of the terms *odd, power, root, even, times*. These words have distinctly different meanings when they are found in a word problem than when they are found in a sentence.

Math vocabulary uses symbols

Math vocabulary includes the use of symbols such as + = % x -

Math vocabulary can rarely be sampled

Math vocabulary requires that the reader pay close attention to each symbol. This is unlike reading where readers can sample or glance through parts of a text and still understand what it contains.

Math sentences can be written in several different ways

A finished, printed text is usually written and then read from left to right in a horizontal fashion. A math sentence may be written and read both horizontally and vertically.

Consider: $3\sqrt{15} = 5$ $\qquad$ $15 \div 3 = 5$

$3 \times 5 = 15$ $\qquad$ $\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times\ 5 \\ \hline 15 \end{array}$

1.2 Math is a problem solving activity

Mathematics is often presented as a series of operations which must be memorized before problems can be solved. This approach commonly requires people first to memorize addition and subtraction facts/charts, multiplication and division facts/charts, etc.

Mathematics does require memorization. However, this is often not the best place to begin with an adult learner.

Math skills are used to solve problems

People who have difficulty with math often have a poor grasp of math concepts, **not** math skills.

Math skills need a context

Just as you teach words in context, so you teach math skills in real life situations.

2. Making math easier

Math becomes easier when we make it real rather than something that is abstract. To do this, we need to use concrete examples of how mathematics is used in everyday life. These examples can then be used as math problems.

In doing this, however, we need to show learners how to separate the **problem-solving skills** of mathematics from the **operational skills**. It is this understanding, coupled with everyday examples, that can make mathematics seem less formidable.

One way to do this is to use math to solve an everyday problem. This approach points to the need to start teaching mathematics by:

Analyzing a problem

- identify when learners need to use math
- pick one of these situations and have learners describe it further
- record the description
- read through the description
- develop a word problem based upon this description

Figuring out the problem

- identify the operational skills needed to complete the problem
- complete the operations (+ - x +)
- expand on the word problem by introducing or practicing the operations as needed

Keeping a record of progress

- use the math charts, *Math Skills and Strategies* and *Summary of Math Progress*, at the end of this chapter to keep track of the math skills that have been used.

This process allows learners to first develop problem-solving skills before they work on operational skills. Too often, however, upgrading programs reverse this process by starting out with a series of operations – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division – which adult learners must work through before they complete an everyday word problem.

By developing operational skills through everyday problems, mathematics becomes less of an abstract activity and more of an activity that can be used with confidence on a daily basis.

Using Math to Solve Everyday Problems

1. a) You live outside of Amherst. Your carpool picks you up at 3:30 pm and takes 45 minutes to get to Pugwash. If the driver's average speed is 63.2 miles per hour, what is the approximate distance in miles between the two towns?

   a) 47 d) 50
   b) 28 e) 48
   c) 63 Answer: 47

   b) If the driver's average speed is 80.3 km per hour and it still takes 45 minutes on the road, what is the exact distance in km between the two towns?

   a) 80.3 d) 60.22
   b) 36.12 e) 45.0
   c) 62.25 Answer: 60.22

2. If infant outfits are on sale at Zeller's for $5.99 each, how many outfits could you buy with $30?

   a) 4 d) 7
   b) 6 e) not enough information given
   c) 5 Answer: 5

3. A dinette set costs $189.97. You pay for it over four months. If you pay the same amount each month, how much will you pay each month?

   Answer: $47.49

4. How much will five packs of batteries cost you if they are priced at $1.17 for each pack?

   Answer: $5.85

3. Tips for teaching math operations

There are four operations basic to mathematics: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Sometimes, key words used in math problems suggest which operation to carry out.

Words Used	Operation
altogether	addition
how many	addition
how much remains	subtraction
take away, minus, from	subtraction
what is the total cost	addition/multiplication
shared equally	division

As shown above, key words for multiplication and division are rare. If no key words are used, choose the operation based on what you are being asked to do. If the problem asks you to:

- combine amounts, **add**
  1 cup sugar + 2 cups flour = 3 cups dry ingredients
- find the difference between two amounts, **subtract**
  10 apples bought - 5 apples eaten = 5 apples left
- find several of one unit, **multiply**
  1 hammer costs $3.00
  4 hammers x $3.00 = $12.00
- find the value of one unit when given the value of several, **divide**
  $15.00 buys 5 litres of oil. Each litre costs $3.00
- share, split, or cut, **divide**
  1 pizza cut into 6 pieces

3.1 Addition and Subtraction

When teaching adults to add, point out that **adding is really a fast way to count.** To illustrate this, bring in a number of poker chips, matches or any other small items that can be counted. Use these items to show that numbers represent real things. Have students separate the items into groups of three, four, five, etc., and then add the groups together to determine the total number.

When teaching **subtraction,** explain that it is the opposite of addition. The addition and subtraction chart at the end of this chapter (*Learning Addition and Subtraction*) will help to illustrate this concept. Learners can take one blank chart and complete it by adding and then take another blank chart and complete it by subtracting. The completed chart can then be used to show the relationship between adding and subtracting.

There are two basic forms that addition and subtraction can take:

- Simple addition and subtraction
- Carrying and borrowing

The first is fairly easy for most learners to understand and master. The second form is more difficult. Be sure to provide your students with as many examples as possible of how carrying and borrowing take place. It is important that your students understand the concepts of carrying and borrowing. These two concepts are sometimes called **regrouping.** Here are two examples of how to illustrate the concept of carrying and two examples on the concept of borrowing.

Carrying

Example 1: **28+36**

= (20+8) + (30+6)
= (20+30) + (8+6)
= 50 + 14
= (50 + 10) + 4
= 60 + 4
= **64**

Example 2:

28
+36

Step one:

	Tens	/	**Units**
	2 dimes	/	8 pennies
+	3 dimes	/	6 pennies
=	5 dimes	/	14 pennies

Step two: 14 pennies can be exchanged for 1 dime and 4 pennies

	Tens	/	**Units**
	1 dime	/	4 pennies
	2 dimes	/	
+	3 dimes	/	
=	6 dimes	/	4 pennies (or **64**)

Borrowing

Example 1:

$$\begin{array}{rcrcrcr} \underline{57} & = & 50+7 & = & 40+(10+7) & = & 40+17 \\ \underline{-38} & = & \underline{-30+8} & = & \underline{-30+8} & = & \underline{-30+8} \\ & & & & & & 10+9=\mathbf{19} \end{array}$$

Example 2:

$$\begin{array}{r} 57 \\ \underline{-38} \end{array}$$

Step one:

Tens	/	**Units**
5 dimes	/	7 pennies
- 3 dimes	/	8 pennies

You cannot subtract 8 from 7 without borrowing

Step two:

Tens	/	**Units**
4 dimes	/	17 pennies
- 3 dimes	/	8 pennies
1 dime	/	9 pennies (or **19**)

- Borrow 1 dime from the group of 5 dimes. 4 dimes remain in this group.
- Change this dime into 10 pennies.
- Add the 10 pennies to the group of 7. You now have 17 pennies.

3.2 Multiplication and division

Multiplication is repeated addition

This can be demonstrated by using a set of objects. For example, take 5 sets of 6 match sticks.

$5 \times 6 = 30$ or $6+6+6+6+6=30$

Most people who have worked on multiplication have probably, at some point, tried to memorize the multiplication tables. Completed tables are hard to memorize. When learners are encouraged to fill in their own tables, however, they start to see patterns which help them to learn the tables. For example, $3 \times 6 = 6 \times 3 = 18$.

The tables have the added advantage of showing the relationship between multiplication and division. The chart at the end of this chapter, *Learning Multiplication and Division*, helps to illustrate this concept.

Division is really a fast way of subtracting.

Take our match stick example again.

30 ÷ 5 = 6 or 30 - 6 - 6 - 6 - 6 = 6

To help learners know whether to multiply or divide, teach them to multiply when they are asked to **increase** the number of units and to divide when they are asked to **decrease** the number of units.

When adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing, learners may find grid paper useful for lining up numbers and for avoiding careless errors.

4. Tips for teaching other math concepts

4.1 Decimals, fractions and percents

Explain to learners that decimals, fractions and percents are just three ways to express parts of a whole object.

.5 = 1/2 = 50%

In most cases, teach decimals first. Learners are usually familiar with money and already have some knowledge of place value. They may also be more comfortable working with whole numbers than with fractions. However, if learners prefer starting with fractions, then do so.

Decimals

When introducing decimals, use money to explain the decimal concept. Explain that money values equal place values. For example, $1.43 can be expressed as *one point four three*. The point indicates the end of the whole numbers and the beginning of the parts.

hundreds /tens /ones . tenths /hundreths/thousandths

Another way to explain decimals is to use the grid chart, *Relating Fractions, Decimals and Percents*, at the end of this chapter. This chart is divided into 100 squares, 25 of which are shaded. The 100 parts make up one whole. The 25 shaded squares represent .25 of the whole. Have learners shade in parts of a blank chart to practice this concept.

Tips

- When adding and subtracting decimals, line up the decimal points and bring the point straight down in your answer.

$$\begin{array}{r} 3.2 \\ +\,54.4 \\ \hline 57.6 \end{array}$$

- When multiplying decimals, ignore the decimal points until you have the answer. After you have the answer, count the total number of decimal places in the numbers multiplied. Then count this number from the right in the answer and place your decimal point.

$$\begin{array}{rl} 2.05 & \text{There are three decimal places in the problem} \\ \times\ 6.1 & \\ \hline 205 & \text{therefore} \\ 1230 & \\ \hline 12.505 & \text{count from the right three decimal places.} \end{array}$$

- When dividing by a decimal, change the divisor into a whole number. This means moving the decimal all the way to the right. The decimal point in the dividend must be moved the same number of places.

$.5\overline{)25}$ .5 = the divisor
25 = the dividend

$$.5\overline{)25.0} = 5\overline{)250.} = 5\overline{)250.}^{\,50.}$$

Fractions

When working with fractions, demonstrate that fractions are simply parts of a whole. Use concrete examples to illustrate this concept, i.e. a carton of eggs, a litre of milk, sheets of paper, etc.

For adding and subtracting fractions, establish the concept of common denominators and regrouping.

For multiplying and dividing fractions, discuss and illustrate the necessity of converting mixed fractions to improper fractions before multiplying or dividing.

Percents

Percentages are used to generalize about all sorts of things – the level of unemployment, the number of people who smoke, etc.

Percent means one in a hundred. This can be illustrated by using money – one hundred cents in one dollar. The grid at the end of the chapter, *Relating Fractions, Decimals, Percents*, also illustrates this concept.

Use everyday examples to illustrate percents. Sales tax, the G.S.T., percentage discounts are a few everyday examples where percent is used.

4.2 Estimation

Estimation involves rounding to the nearest place value and is one of the most vital concepts for understanding numbers and mathematical computations. Estimation is based upon concepts involving number, space, time, distance and many types of measurements. It can save time and effort and can help guard against mistakes.

Explain to students that there are two answers for most math problems – an **exact answer** and an **estimated one**. This is true for adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing. Illustrate estimation by drawing on people's experiences.
Examples may include:

- cooking – People often judge the amount of flour, sugar, water, etc. and the cooking time.
- building – Workers can estimate the amount of lumber, bricks, concrete, etc. to complete the job.
- driving – People estimate the distance they must travel and the time it will take to get to their destination.
- shopping – People often estimate the price of their groceries.

Math Skills and Strategies

Name: Date:

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Knowing numbers and counting			
Counts, reads and writes numbers less than 100			
Counts, reads and writes numbers greater than 100			
Understands negative numbers			
Solves word problems by counting			
Addition and Subtraction			
Knows addition and subtraction facts to 10			
Adds and subtracts two and three place numbers - no carrying or borrowing			
Adds and subtracts two and three place numbers with carrying and borrowing			
Solves word problems using addition and subtraction			
Understands relationship between addition and subtraction			
Multiplication and Division			
Knows multiplication and division facts to 10			
Multiplies and divides two and three place numbers			
Determines average			
Determines mean and median			
Uses ratio and proportion			
Solves word problems using multiplication and division			
Understands relationship between multiplication and division			
Fractions			
Reads and writes simple fractions			
Adds, subtracts fractions			
Reduces fractions			
Finds common denominator			
Multiplies and divides fractions			
Writes fraction as a decimal			
Writes fraction as a percent			
Solves word problems using fractions			

Math Skills and Strategies cont.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Decimals			
Reads and writes decimals			
Adds and subtracts decimals			
Multiplies and divides decimals			
Writes decimal as a percent			
Writes decimal as a fraction			
Solves word problems using decimals			
Percents			
Reads and writes percents			
Finds the percent of a whole number			
Finds the whole number when the part and the percent are given			
Finds the part when the whole number and the percent are given			
Writes percent as a decimal			
Writes percent as a fraction			
Solves word problems using percents			
Charts and Graphs			
Reads and interprets charts and graphs			
Shapes			
Understands basic geometric shapes: circles, squares, triangles, rectangles			
Estimation			
Uses estimation to solve word and operational problems			

Summary of Math Progress

Name: Date:

	Comments:
Math strengths	
Math weaknesses	
Math goals	

Learning Addition and Subtraction

Name: Date:

+/-	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										

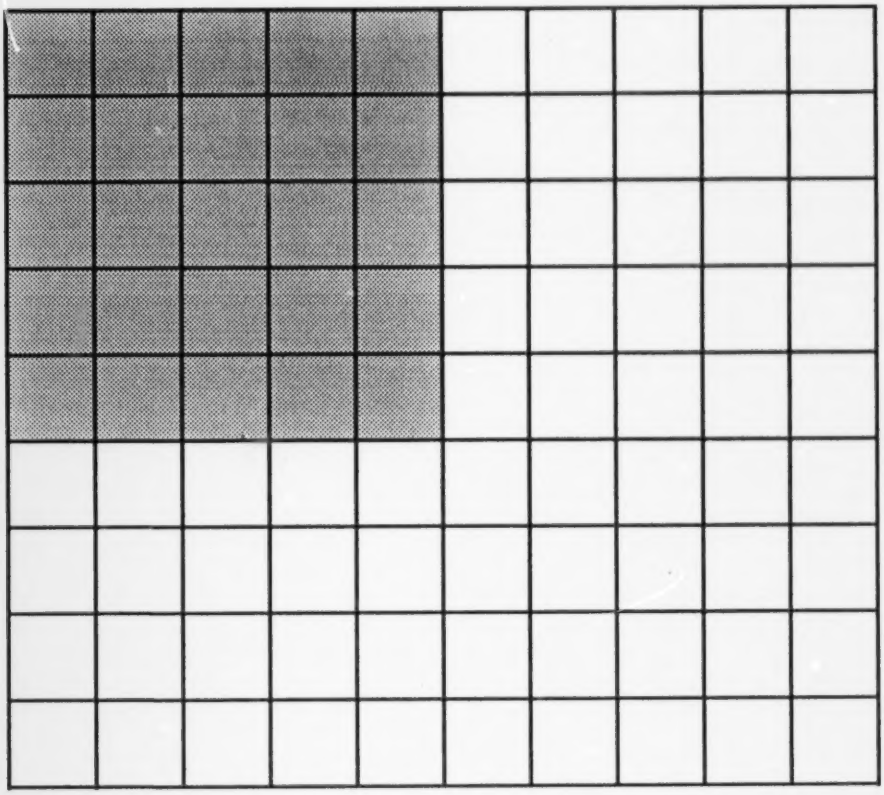
Learning Multiplication and Division

Name: Date:

x / +	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										

Relating Fractions, Decimals and Percents

Name: Date:



$$\frac{25}{100} = .25 = 25\% = \frac{1}{4}$$

Chapter 4

Getting Started

How to find out what adults want or need to know

When adults inquire about upgrading programs, they may feel somewhat vulnerable. This may be the first time that they have spoken to anyone about wanting or needing to improve their reading, writing or math skills. Consequently, this first discussion, telephone conversation or meeting must be handled sensitively.

The first conversation may take place in a community college, community centre, workplace, or someone's home. It does not matter where it takes place, but it does matter what happens at this meeting.

Every adult approaching a program for the first time will appreciate honesty and sincerity. They need to know that what they say will be taken seriously. This is no time to jump to conclusions about people. Most adults voluntarily register in programs and, if they are not pleased, they will "vote with their feet" and leave.

It makes sense that you give some thought to making people feel as comfortable as possible right from the beginning.

1. How can you make people feel comfortable at the first meeting?

Here are some suggestions:

- hold the meeting in a quiet, private place.
- offer some comforts such as coffee or smoking.
- make sure that the discussion will not be interrupted.
- plan some questions to ask, but do not necessarily stick to them if the person wants to talk about other things.
- talk only, and arrange another time for initial assessment about reading, writing or math.
- make the reading, writing and math parts of the first session seem less like tests and assessments and more like places to begin.

2. What kinds of questions might be asked?

The first meeting is always the most difficult. To assist you in getting started, a questionnaire has been provided at the end of this chapter which you can use or adapt to find out what people may want or need to know. Your discussions may venture into important background areas which may change the way you plan future sessions.

3. How can you record these initial conversations?

Learners may tell you personal information as they answer your questions. They may relate unpleasant recollections of past school experiences. They may feel loss of pride as they reveal delicate aspects of their lives. The last thing you want to do is to make the discussion more uncomfortable by taking detailed, secret notes.

There is, however, a need to take some notes for later reference. You may take these notes mentally and record your discussion after learners have left or you may jot down details as people speak.

If you take notes, explain why you are doing so. One way to make people feel comfortable while taking notes is to sit so they can see what is on the page.

Before you write:

- explain that the notes are going into their personal file, accessible only by you and them
- explain that the notes will be one way to keep track of their goals and progress

As you write:

- read what you are putting on the page from time to time
- ask, "Is that how you want this put? How would you like me to write this part down?"

There are many questions listed on the next few pages. These questions are intended as discussion starters only, not as a list you work through until completed. You do not need to ask all the questions on the first session; you may want to save some for another time.

Some people will want to tell you a great deal about themselves. Others will need to take time to get to know and trust you before they share any information.

Some of the questions should also be repeated from time to time to get a sense of growth and change. Those questions which deal with people's attitudes to reading and writing are particularly good measures of how people may feel about their reading and writing. You may also want to ask people about the kind of support they are getting from family and friends.

Interview Questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer: _____ Place: _____

These questions let you discuss :

- people's concerns about the program
- their concepts of reading
- their concepts of writing
- their concepts of math
- past learning experiences

You do not need to ask all the questions in the first session; you may want to ask some at another time. Before starting, take time to explain what will be written down and why. After the interview, read over the notes you made during the interview with the learner.

A. Program Concerns

1. Do you know what kinds of courses and programs are offered in this community?

   Are you sure that this is the program for you?

2. What might cause you problems while you are working in this program?

   Do you need child care?

   Do you need assistance with transportation?

3. Are you concerned that your health may interfere with your work in this program?

4. What do you hope to get out of this program?

5. Do your friends, family, partner know that you're thinking about taking this program? What do they think?

6. Do you have any questions about this program?

B. Concepts of Reading

1. What kinds of things do you like/dislike to read?

2. What kinds of things would you like to be able to read?

3. If you are reading and you come to a word that you don't know, what do you do to try to figure it out? (Probe for responses.)

   Is there anything else you would do?

   What were you taught to do?

4. How would you describe your reading ability?

5. How would you describe a good reader?

6. How would you describe a poor reader?

7. Who is a good reader that you know?

C. Concepts of Writing

1. Have you done any writing lately? What kinds of writing have you done?

2. What would you like to be able to write?

3. Do you ever have difficulty writing things down?

   What kinds of problems do you run into?

   What do you usually do about them?

   What were you taught to do?

4. How would you describe your writing skills?

5. How would you describe a good writer?

6. How would you describe a poor writer?

7. Who is a good writer that you know?

D. Concepts of Math

1. Have you had to do any math lately? What did you have to do? i.e. banking, measuring, figuring out percentage discounts

2. What kinds of math would you like to be able to do?

3. Do you ever have difficulty figuring things out?

   What do you do?

   What were you taught to do?

4. Would you describe yourself as someone who is good with numbers?

E. Past Learning Experiences

1. I'm interested in knowing how you were taught when you went to school. Can you remember what happened in your classes in the first few grades?

   What happened later in school? (Depending upon the response, you can ask the learner to elaborate, i.e. how well they could do the tasks assigned.)

2. Were you given any special help with your reading, writing or math in school? If so, when?

   What was that help like?

3. When did you leave school? Why?

4. Have you attended any other upgrading programs prior to coming to this program? (Ask for a description of the program, the materials used, the approach used.)

   Did you have difficulty with the program?

   Did you like the materials and the approach?

F. Summary of Responses

If possible, write your responses after the session is over. This will reduce the impression that the interview was some sort of a test.

Chapter 5

How To Determine Reading, Writing And Math Levels

This chapter outlines four levels suitable for people working to improve reading, writing and math skills up to a Grade 9 or pre-GED level. The levels are designed to provide learners, tutors, instructors and teachers with some idea of where to begin. The levels will assist people in setting goals, selecting materials, developing learning activities and evaluating progress.

There are 4 levels – A, B, C and D
Each level includes:

- Suggested Learning Materials
- Suggested Learning Activities
- Suggested Learning Outcomes for reading, writing and math

Learners and instructors should:

- choose learning activities and materials which are relevant and interesting
- move from level to level when reading, writing and math levels differ
- use the Learning Outcomes as a guide and not a checklist
- inform Program Co-ordinators of progress

Level A
Beginning Level Reading

People reading at this level are not independent readers. Some may not be able to read at all. They tend to be overly careful readers who worry about reading every word perfectly. Consequently, reading outcomes should stress the need to understand what is read. Materials used should be familiar or important to the students. Reading strategies should encourage readers to concentrate on understanding what is read.

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Reading

Reading Materials

Work towards reading parts of some of the materials listed under Level A materials, especially language experience stories and other familiar texts. Learners may get frustrated when trying to read independently. Use choral and assisted reading techniques.

Reading Strategies

Help learners to develop more fluent reading strategies, such as:

- reading ahead
- rereading parts of the text
- predicting what the text might say and confirming this prediction by reading ahead
- making meaningful and parallel substitutions for unknown words
- using phonics or word recognition when the meaning of the text is also being considered
- using picture and visual clues to help make meaningful predictions about the text.

Help learners to recognize non-fluent reading strategies, such as:

- sounding out words (phonics) without thinking about what would make sense in the text
- substituting a word by thinking of words which look similar (relying only on graphic information) without thinking about what would make sense in the text.

Help learners to recognize that reading does not and should not require perfection.

Retelling Skills

Retells a few points from a text which has just been read

Starting to distinguish fact from opinion in a text

Level A
Beginning Level Writing

People working at this level can usually write their name and address. They may be able to write some personal information, spell a handful of words from memory, and write a few sentences with assistance. Writing outcomes should stress writing for real purposes (such as letter writing) while developing some independent writing skills.

Suggested Learning Outcomes - Writing

Formation and Development of Ideas

Developing some interest and motivation to write

Developing some confidence to think of ideas

Learning to take risks (e.g. trying to write a word as it looks or sounds; writing short first drafts and doing some revising and editing for spelling and punctuation)

Type and Organization of Writing

Writes name, address and telephone number

Writes with assistance:

- simple sentences
- lists (simple grocery lists, reminders, etc.)
- captions for familiar pictures
- simple brainstorms
- bills and cheques
- simplified application forms

Revision

Adds or makes changes to a text with assistance

Mechanics

Spelling

- spells some words automatically
- sometimes identifies misspelled words
- adds frequently misspelled words to a personal dictionary for quick reference

Punctuation

- aware of (but not necessarily independently using) periods and capitals

Letter Formation

- learning to use upper and lower case letters
- learning to use print, script or both

Level A
Beginning Level Math

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Math

- Counts, reads and writes numbers to 100
- Knows addition and subtraction facts to 10
- Adds two digits, no carrying or exchanging
- Subtracts without borrowing or exchanging
- Solves simple word problems using above skills
- Understands the concept of addition
- Understands the concept of subtraction

Level A – Beginning Level

Suggested Learning Materials

People who read at this level are able to read with assistance parts of some of the following kinds of materials.

- Basic banking items
- Easy-to-read newspapers
- Everyday items (menus, Yellow Pages, postcards, bills and invoices)
- Familiar non-fiction (how-to books, familiar recipes)
- Familiar fiction, including poems
- Labels (grocery and some pharmacy items)
- Language experience stories
- Learning kits
- Learner written material
- Signs (store, street, entrance, exit and washroom)
- Simple application forms
- Some illustrated advertisements
- Songs (words of familiar songs and hymns)
- Written conversations

Suggested Learning Activities

The following activities can be adapted to the individual learner's interests and should combine reading, writing and discussion whenever possible.

- Assisted reading to learn to use effective reading strategies
- Brainstorming to connect ideas together about a topic
- Choral reading to get the rhythm of fluent reading
- Cloze to learn to make sense of what is read through the use of prediction skills
- Language experience to create meaningful and personal reading material
- Mini-lessons to improve individual problem areas
- Personal dictionary to create a personal spelling program
- Projects to explore ideas and topics of interest
- Written conversation to write as much as possible with plenty of support

Level B
Basic Level Reading

People reading at this level can do some independent reading; however, they are still very hesitant and uncomfortable with the reading process. They tend to believe that reading should be perfect and often try to figure out every word. Reading outcomes should encourage people to develop an understanding of what they read.

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Reading

Reading Materials

Reads parts of many of the learning materials listed under Level B including simple charts, graphs, maps, etc.

Reads sections of familiar material with assistance

Reading Strategies

Developing more fluent reading strategies, such as:

- reading ahead
- rereading parts of the text
- predicting what the text might say and confirming this prediction by reading ahead
- making meaningful and parallel substitutions for unknown words
- using phonics or word recognition when the meaning of the text is also being considered
- using picture and visual clues to help make meaningful predictions about the text.

Starting to recognize non-fluent reading strategies, such as:

- sounding out words (phonics) without thinking about what would make sense in the text
- substituting a word by thinking of words which look similar (relying only on graphic information) without thinking about what would make sense in the text.

Starting to recognize that reading does not and should not require perfection

Distinguishes fact from opinion in a text

Retelling Skills

Retells the main idea from a text which has just been read

Recalls some details from the text

Sequences the events

Describes main characters

Starting to form and support opinions based on what has been read

Beginning to compare ideas with other texts or sources of information

Level B
Basic Level Writing

People working at this level can write a few sentences independently and are trying to write at least a half page. Writing outcomes should stress writing for a variety of purposes with some beginning idea of how to organize ideas. Writing independence grows through increased confidence with spelling and punctuation.

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Writing

Formation and Development of Ideas

Developing a greater interest and motivation to write

Developing more confidence to think of ideas

Learning to take risks (eg. writing a word by using "invented spelling" – spelling on the basis of how one thinks the word looks or sounds; writing first drafts which contain the beginning ideas, revising these ideas, then editing spelling and punctuation for a final draft)

Developing a sense of pride in finished work

Type and Organization of Writing

Composes about one half page of writing – this writing should show a clear sequence of events and contain a central theme with supporting information

Organizes ideas showing some attempt to categorize independently

Independently writes:

- shopping and other lists
- messages

Needs assistance to write:

- letters
- brainstorms
- short reports
- short articles and opinions
- notes to summarize discussions or learning materials
- simple application forms
- simple charts
- journals or diaries
- bills and cheques
- stories

Revision

Adds new ideas (often at the end of a text)

Learning to insert ideas into a text that has been writtten

Learning to delete unneccessary, repeated or unrelated parts

Mechanics

Spelling

- independently spells a growing number of words
- identifies some misspelled words
- looks for spelling patterns and word families
- starting to understand the endings -s, -ing, -ed
- uses the first letter in each word to place words in alphabetical order
- adds frequently misspelled words to a personal dictionary for quick reference

Punctuation

- needs assistance to use commas
- independently uses periods, capitals, question marks and exclamation marks

Letter Formation

Correctly forms and uses upper and lower case letters

Uses script and/or printed letters

Level B
Basic Level Math

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Math

- Counts, reads and writes numbers to 1000
- Adds and subtracts numbers with several digits
- Adds with carrying
- Subtracts using borrowing
- Knows multiplication tables to 10
- Multiplies and divides by one number
- Solves word problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division
- Uses money to calculate correct change

Level B – Basic Level

Suggested Learning Materials

People who read at this level are able to read all or parts of the following kinds of materials.

- Advertisements
- Basic banking items
- Easy-to-read newspapers
- Everyday items (menus, Yellow Pages, TV guides, postcards, workplace instructions or forms, bills and invoices, notices on bulletin boards, school notices)
- Familiar fiction
- Familiar non-fiction (how-to books, recipes, biographies, health, science, history and geography information, workplace reports and memos)
- Language experience stories
- Learning kits
- Learner written material
- Newspapers or magazines (parts of some easier-to-read papers such as headlines, photo captions or familiar sections)
- Simple application forms
- Simple charts and graphs
- Simple maps
- Songs (words of familiar songs and hymns)
- Written conversations

Suggested Learning Activities

The following activities can be adapted to the individual learner's interests and should combine reading, writing and discussion whenever possible.

- Assisted reading to learn to use effective reading strategies
- Brainstorming to connect ideas together about a topic
- Book or movie reviews and summaries to learn to get the main ideas and to write opinions
- Choral reading to get the rhythm of fluent reading
- Cloze to learn to make sense of what is read
- Interviews and surveys to get information from all sources, including knowledgeable people
- Journals to keep a diary of personal thoughts and events
- Language experience to create meaningful and personal reading material
- Letter writing to get information, respond to information or simply correspond
- Mini-lessons to improve individual problem areas
- Personal dictionary to create a personal spelling program
- Projects to explore topics of interest. Projects are particularly useful and versatile. All of the learning materials listed can be used as the basis for a project
- Written conversation to write as much as possible with plenty of support

Level C
Intermediate Level Reading

People reading at this level can read longer parts of various texts, but may be unsure that they have understood the text. They also tend to read quickly, skimming over parts of the text or parts of words which are critical for a real understanding of the piece. Consequently, reading outcomes should stress reading for meaning through use of varied reading speeds and through careful consideration of the ideas presented, the organization of the text, and the meanings of parts of words.

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Reading

Reading Materials

Reads many of the materials listed under Level C independently

Reads with ease and understanding a number of different kinds of reading materials

Reads longer parts without having to stop for assistance

Reading Strategies

Uses more fluent reading strategies:

- makes meaningful and parallel substitutions for unknown words
- uses phonics or word recognition to make sure that critical words which alter the meaning of the text are not misread
- reads ahead
- rereads parts
- predicts what the text might say and confirms this by reading ahead
- uses picture and visual clues to help make meaningful predictions about the text

Recognizes non-fluent reading strategies

- sounds out words (phonics) without thinking about what would make sense in the text
- guesses a word by thinking of words which look similar (relying only on graphic information) without thinking about what would make sense in the text

Starts to recognize when to use different reading speeds and strategies when skimming, scanning, sampling or studying text

Retelling Skills

Summarizes the main idea

Recalls details from the text

Sequences main events

Describes main characters

With assistance:

- forms opinions
- compares ideas and information with other texts

Level C
Intermediate Level Writing

People working at this level can write at least one full page and are working to organize these ideas clearly into paragraphs. Writing outcomes should stress writing independently for a variety of purposes. As well, some independent strategies for improving spelling and punctuation should be emphasized.

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Writing

Formation and Development of Ideas

Developing interest and motivation to write

Sense of pride in finished work

Developing confidence to think of ideas and expand them into a few organized paragraphs – they are beginning to think of more than one way to express an idea, mostly through discussion

Learning to take risks (eg. writing a word by using "invented spelling" – spelling on the basis of how one thinks the word looks or sounds; writing first drafts which contain the beginning ideas, revising these ideas, then editing spelling and punctuation for a final draft)

Focusing first on the composition and quality of ideas, rather than on the mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, letter formation, etc.

Improving the ease and speed with which ideas are composed, using techniques such as discussion, brainstorming or notemaking

Improving the relevance and maturity of topic choices

Clearly writing ideas, staying on topic and adding more supportive details to main ideas

Type and Organization of Writing

Writes about one full page which is organized into paragraphs. Uses a variety of writing forms such as letters, point form notes, brainstorms and short reports.

Writes independently:

- brainstorms showing categorization
- notes to recall and organize details and ideas
- letters - both personal and business
- journals or diaries
- simple charts and graphs
- simple application forms
- bills and cheques

Writes with assistance:

- simple reports clearly stating facts
- articles or essays giving opinions
- poetry
- stories

Revision

Adds new ideas within the text and at the end of the text

Writes for specific audiences

Deletes and rearranges ideas with assistance

Mechanics

Spelling

- spells many words automatically
- knows where and how to find the correct spelling for problematic words
- consistently identifies misspelled words
- looks for spelling patterns and word families
- knows endings such as - ness, - ful, - ly, - tion, etc.
- knows prefixes such as re-, pre-, un-, mis-, etc.
- understands purposes of apostrophes and correctly uses them
- uses some rules to form plurals

Punctuation

- uses capitals, periods, question marks, exclamation marks, apostrophes
- uses with assistance commas and quotation marks

Letter Formation

Correctly uses upper and lower case letters

Uses script and printed letters

Level C
Intermediate Math Level

Suggested Learning Outcomes - Math

- Multiplies and divides two or more numbers
- Reads and writes simple fractions, reduces fractions, finds the common denominator, adds, subtracts, multiplies and divides fractions
- Reads and writes decimals, changes decimals into fractions
- Solves problems using fractions and decimals as well as multiplication and division
- Knows the basics of the metric system
- Uses and interprets graphs and charts

Level C – Intermediate Level

Suggested Learning Materials

People who read at this level are able to read sections of the following materials.

- Advertisements - fliers, newspaper inserts
- Application forms
- Banking and tax items (cheques, bills)
- Brochures (community agencies and government information brochures)
- Everyday items (directions on labels, instruction manuals, schedules and timetables, notices on bulletin boards, school notices, telephone directories)
- Fiction (adapted versions of the classics, soft cover novels, short chapter books)
- Learning kits
- Learner written material
- Magazines
- Maps (bus, road, city and provincial maps)
- Newspapers (sections of the daily paper, church and community papers)
- Non-fiction (how-to books, biographies, local history, world history, science, Canadian geography, travel guides, reference materials including tables of contents and indexes)
- Poetry
- Simple charts and graphs

Suggested Learning Activities

The following activities can be adapted to the individual learner's interests and should combine reading, writing and discussion whenever possible.

- Assisted reading to continue to develop more effective reading strategies
- Book or movie reviews and summaries to learn to get the main ideas as well as to express opinions
- Brainstorming to connect ideas about a topic of importance or to find out how writers organize their writing
- Choral reading to get the feel of fluent reading with more difficult texts
- Cloze activities to learn to make sense of what is read
- Interviews and surveys, oral and written, to find out information or opinions
- Journal writing to write personal diary entries
- Language experience to gain familiarity with writing difficult kinds and forms of writing
- Letter writing to get information, respond to information, or simply correspond
- Mini-lessons to improve individual problem areas
- Personal dictionaries to create or expand a personal spelling program
- Projects to explore, read and write about ideas and topics of interest
- Report writing to learn to write on the job
- Written conversation to have a conversation on paper

Level D
Pre-GED Level Reading

People reading at this level read longer texts, but may still feel unsure about their ability to understand them. They may find it difficult to follow the sequence of ideas in a longer piece of writing. Varied vocabulary or technical language may be confusing and difficult to figure out. Reading outcomes should stress reading various forms of texts and developing strategies for understanding the difficult parts of these texts.

Suggested Learning Outcomes - Reading

Reading Materials

Reads and understands most of the materials listed under Level D

Reads longer and more technical material with assistance

Reading Strategies

Develops more fluent reading strategies, especially making meaningful and parallel substitutions for unknown words, using phonics or word recognition to make sure that critical words which alter the meaning of the text are not misread, reading ahead, rereading parts, predicting what the text might say and confirming this by reading ahead.

Recognizes non-fluent reading strategies, especially sounding out words (phonics) without thinking about what would make sense in the text. Tries to guess a word by thinking of words which look similar (relying only on graphic information) without thinking about what would make sense in the text.

Recognizes when to use different reading speeds and strategies such as skimming, scanning, sampling or studying text

Focuses on the details of the words and ideas in the text in order to fully understand what the piece means

Retelling Skills

Summarizes the main idea
Recalls details from the text
Sequences main events
Describes main characters
Forms opinions
Compares ideas and information with other texts

Level D
Pre-GED Level Writing

People working at this level can write at least a few pages and are developing skills to organize these pages into sections and paragraphs. Although they can use a variety of writing forms independently, they feel unsure of the details of their work and need to develop editing skills for punctuation, grammar and spelling.

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Writing

Formation and Development of Ideas

Confident in thinking of ideas and expanding these ideas into organized paragraphs – considers more than one way to express an idea

Learning to take risks (eg. writing a word by using "invented spelling" – spelling on the basis of how one thinks the word looks or sounds; writing first drafts which contain the beginning ideas, revising these ideas, then editing spelling and punctuation for a final draft)

Focusing on the composition and quality of ideas when starting to write, rather than on the mechanics such as spelling. punctuation, letter formation, etc.

Improving the ease and speed with which ideas are composed, using techniques such as brainstorming, notemaking and discussion

Choosing topics that are relevant and mature

Writing ideas clearly, staying on topic and adding supportive details to main ideas

Expanding ideas into a few organized pages

Developing a sense of pride in finished work

Type and Organization of Writing

Independently:

- writes notes to summarize and mark down details
- writes longer articles or opinion essays
- writes summaries of books or short articles
- writes letters, both personal and business
- completes more complex application forms
- develops charts and graphs (for comparing information)
- writes a variety of forms including poetry, short stories, etc.

Uses parallel structure with assistance

Writes with assistance longer reports and stories

Revision

Writes for specific audiences

Adds new ideas within the text and at the end of a text

Deletes ideas

Rearranges ideas with assistance

Mechanics

Spelling

- spells many words automatically
- knows where and how to find the correct spelling for problematic words
- consistently identifies misspelled words
- looks for spelling patterns and word families
- knows endings such as - ness, - ful, - ly, - tion, etc.
- knows prefixes such as re-, pre-, un-, mis-, etc.
- understands purposes of apostrophes and uses them correctly
- uses some rules to form plurals

Punctuation

- independently uses capitals, periods, exclamation marks, apostrophes, quotation marks
- with assistance uses commas, colons, parentheses, semi-colons

Grammar

- independently uses subject verb agreement, correct sentence structure, parts of speech
- with assistance uses: pronoun agreement and parallel structure

Level D
Pre-GED Level Math

Suggested Learning Outcomes – Math

- Uses ratios and proportions
- Works with percents
- Completes interest word problems
- Has a basic understanding of geometric shapes
- Determines means and medians
- Uses and interprets graphs and charts

Level D – Pre-GED Level

Suggested Learning Materials

People who read at this level are able to read most of the following materials:

- Advertisements - fliers, newspaper inserts
- Application forms
- Banking and tax form items (cheques, bills, tax guides, loan contracts, mortgages)
- Brochures (community agencies and government information)
- Charts and graphs
- Everyday items (directions on labels, instruction manuals, schedules and timetables, notices on bulletin boards, workplace instructions, contracts, leases, school notices, telephone directories, first aid books)
- Fiction (short chapter books, soft cover novels, adapted versions of the classics)
- Learner written material (magazines on themes)
- Learning kits
- Magazines
- Maps (bus, road, city and provincial maps)
- Newspapers (the daily paper, church and community papers)
- Non-fiction (how-to books, biographies, local history, world history, science, health, geography, travel guides, use of reference materials including tables of contents and indexes)
- Poetry

Suggested Learning Activities

The following types of activities are meant to be adapted to the individual learner's interests, but should combine reading, writing and discussion whenever possible.

- Assisted reading to continue to develop more effective reading strategies
- Book or movie reviews and summaries to learn the main ideas and to express opinions
- Brainstorms to connect ideas about a topic of importance or to find out how writers organize their writing
- Cloze activities to learn to focus on problem areas
- Interviews and surveys, oral and written, to find out information or opinions
- Journal writing to write personal diary entries
- Language experience to gain familiarity with writing difficult kinds and forms of writing
- Letter writing to get information, respond to information or simply correspond
- Mini-lessons to improve individual problem areas
- Personal dictionaries to create or expand a personal spelling program
- Projects to explore, read and write about ideas and topics of interest
- Report writing to learn to write on the job
- Written conversation to have a conversation on paper

Suggested reading materials for Levels A,B,C and D

Here are some materials you may use to complete a reading assessment. Most of these are available through the regional Literacy Resource Centres.

Level A – Beginning Reader

People who are reading at this level may be able to read parts of the following materials with assistance. They are not independent readers.

Advertisements

Newspaper fliers are useful reading material for some beginning readers.

Basic Banking Items

Cheques, deposit slips, monthly statements and other items used in everyday banking could be part of this selection of reading material.

Easy to Read Newspapers

East Coast Reader – This easy-to-read newspaper is produced by the Teachers of English as a Second Language in Atlantic Canada. Available free of charge to programs, it offers news and other information of interest to adults. The *West Coast Reader, English Express, Consumer Talk, Neighbours* and *Welcome News* are other newspapers of this kind. Check with the regional Literacy Resource Centre for more titles.

Everyday Items

Many everyday items are essential reading materials for Level A learners since they are often obstacles in day to day situations. Menus, postcards, bills and invoices, Yellow Page directories are just a few examples.

Familiar Fiction

Some pieces of fiction are enjoyable to read because the story is familiar and predictable. Children's stories, Bible stories and fables fall into this category. These may be available through the regional Literacy Resource Centre or the public library.

Familiar Non-fiction

Easy-to-read items such as recipes, how-to books and step-by-step instruction guides are useful for the Level A reader. Many of these can be found in the children's non-fiction section of the public library and the regional Literacy Resource Centre.

Labels

Labels from food and grocery products or from the workplace can be used as reading material for the Level A reader. These can be placed in a scrap book. Enlarged samples make the small print easier to read.

Language Experience

Learners dictate ideas about their own experiences or topics of interest. The tutor writes this information down. This writing can then be used as reading material. See *Language Experience* in the Activities Section for more information.

Learning Kits

Kits about a variety of topics of interest to adults are available. Health, science, geography, world issues, women's issues and work are some topics covered. The kits include materials in graph, chart and poster form. These are available through the regional Literacy Resource Centre. Parts are designed for beginning readers.

Learner Written Material

There is a growing selection of material written by adult learners in Nova Scotia. Publications such as *Learners' Times, Update Magazine, Spry Lines, The Reader* and *READ MORE* are available through the regional Literacy Resource Centre or public library.

Publications from programs across Canada may also be borrowed. These include *East End Literacy Readers* and *Writer's Voice*, magazines written by adult learners in Toronto, and *Voices*, a monthly publication from British Columbia which features the writings of beginning and more advanced writers. There is also a collection of easy-to-read fiction and non-fiction books written by adults involved in the British adult basic education program known as ALBSU.

Signs

Books which have pictures of signs or photos of local signs are very useful.

Simple Application Forms

Uncomplicated forms which ask for name, address and phone number are useful for Level A readers.

Songs

Lyrics from familiar songs can be used with the Level A learner.

Written Conversations

An explanation of how to do this activity appears in *Written Conversation* in the Activities Section. These conversations provide good reading material and may be reread from time to time.

Level B - Basic Level

People who read at this level may be able to read parts of the following materials independently. Many of the materials which follow appear in the Level A list. The difference between the Level A and Level B reader is that the Level B reader reads these materials with less assistance.

Advertisements

Some newspaper fliers are manageable for Level B readers if there are easy to follow pictures with captions. However, many fliers are tricky to read because the pictures are small and the captions not easy to predict.

Basic Banking Items – See Level A

Easy-to-Read Newspapers – See Level A

Everyday Items

Many everyday items are essential reading materials for Level B learners since they are often obstacles in day to day situations. Directions on labels, instruction manuals, timetables and bus schedules, notices on bulletin boads, school notices and the white pages of the telephone directory are a few examples.

Familiar Fiction

See Level A. For Level B, include the easy-to-read classics available through the regional Literacy Resource Centre.

Familiar Non-fiction

See Level A. For Level B, include short biographies about well known people and factual material about topics of interest such as pollution or family legal aid. These are available at the regional Literacy Resource Centre. Memos or bulletin board notes from the workplace could also be included.

Language Experience Stories

See Level A. For Level B, include longer stories.

Learning Kits – See Level A

Learner Written Material – See Level A

Newspapers

Parts of easier-to-read newspapers such as a community or church paper can be manageable for the Level B reader. Headlines, captions, the *TV Guide* and stories which are familiar are good places to begin.

Simple Application Forms

Uncomplicated forms which ask for name, address, phone number and some personal information about previous work experience or skills are useful for Level B readers.

Simple Charts and Graphs

Charts and graphs are often very difficult to read because they demand a great deal of background knowledge to understand. However, some Level B readers may encounter graphs or charts in the workplace or be interested in a topic which frequently is presented in this format, for example weather charts or sports statistics.

Simple Maps

Maps are often difficult to read because they demand a great deal of background knowledge by the reader. However, familiar road maps or local community maps are useful places to start map reading with Level B learners. Making a map of the route to the upgrading program, to the store or to work will also be a comfortable way to begin map reading.

Songs – See Level A

Written Conversations

An explanation of how to do this activity appears in *Written Conversation* in the Activities Section. These conversations are good reading material and may be reread from time to time.

Level C – Intermediate Level

People who read at this level may be able to read parts of the following materials independently.

Advertisements

Level C readers should be able to read parts of advertising fliers, newspaper inserts and material delivered in the mail.

Application Forms

Level C readers may encounter lengthier and more complicated job application forms, unemployment insurance forms and rent or housing forms.

Banking Items

Level C readers may need to independently read information in order to obtain different kinds of accounts, chequing systems and bank cards.

Brochures

Community agencies, government services, information centres, doctors' offices and health clinics distribute brochures which Level C readers may want or need to read.

Everyday Items

Many everyday items are essential reading materials for Level C learners since they are often obstacles in day to day situations. Directions on labels, instruction manuals, timetables and bus schedules, notices on bulletin boads, school notices and the white pages of the telephone directory are a few examples.

Fiction

Short versions of the classics are available at the regional Literacy Resource Centre as well as short chapter books and soft cover novels.

Learning Kits

Kits about a variety of topics of interest to adults are available. Health, science, geography, world issues, women's issues and work are some of the topics covered. The kits include materials in graph, chart and poster form. These are available through the regional Literacy Resource Centre.

Learner Written Material

Much of this material may be independent reading for Level C readers. The interest in reading what other adult learners write is genuine and inspires writing projects.

Magazines

If a variety of magazines covering a broad range of topics are available, Level C readers may find sections in the magazines which they can read independently.

Maps

Maps are often difficult to read because they demand a great deal of background knowledge by the reader. Bus maps, road maps or local community maps are useful maps for Level C learners.

Newspapers

There are a variety of newspapers of varying degrees of difficulty. Provide as many as possible from the tabloid style, local community paper, daily paper and church paper. The daily paper may be hard for someone at this level while other styles may be more manageable. Familiar sections of the paper or sections of particular interest may be read more easily.

Non-fiction

A variety of instructional and how-to books, biographies of famous or interesting people, and science and geography materials written for adults are available from the regional Literacy Resource Centre or the public library. Information sheets, instruction sheets and memos from the workplace could also be used.

Poetry

The regional Literacy Resource Centre or the public library offer poetry selections which may be of interest to Level C readers.

Simple Charts and Graphs – See Level B

Level D – Pre-GED Level

People who read at this level may be able to read most of the following materials independently.

Advertisements

Level D readers should be able to read advertising fliers, newspaper inserts and material delivered in the mail.

Application Forms

Level D readers may encounter lengthier and more complicated job application forms, unemployment insurance forms, and rent, housing or work-related forms.

Banking Items

Level D readers may need to independently read information in order to obtain different kinds of accounts, chequing systems and bank cards.

Brochures

Community agencies, government services, information centres, doctors' offices and health clinics distribute brochures which Level D readers may want or need to read.

Charts and Graphs

Level D readers who want to go on to GED work will need to gain experience reading charts and graphs. A great deal of background information is required to interpret graphs correctly. As well, Level D readers may want to become familiar with a variety of types and formats.

Fiction

Short versions of the classics, soft cover novels and short chapter books are available at the regional Literacy Resource Centre and public libraries.

Learning Kits – see Level C

Learner Written Material – see Level C

Magazines

If different magazines about a variety of topics are available, Level D readers should be able to find one which they can read almost independently.

Newpapers – See Level C

Non-fiction

A variety of instructional and how-to books, biographies of famous or interesting people and health, science and geography workbooks written for adults are available from the regional Literacy Resource Centre or the public library. Information sheets, instruction sheets, memos and health and safety materials from the workplace could also be used.

Poetry

The regional Literacy Resource Centre or public library offer poetry selections which may be of interest to Level D readers.

Chapter 6

How Can Reading Strategies Be Determined?

Determining a person's reading strategies is a difficult process. Everyone brings different expectations and concerns to an assessment.

Learners may wonder:

- Will I be tested?
- Will I be able to do the tests?
- Will they think I am stupid?
- What if they don't accept me into the program?

Instructors or tutors may wonder:

- Will I offend this person by using this assessment technique?
- Will a test stifle his/her abilities?
- Can I get a clear picture about this learner's strengths and weaknesses through this assessment?
- We need to get a good idea about where to begin as quickly as possible. How do I do this?

An informal assessment can reduce these feelings of anxiety. It can be carried out in a relaxed atmosphere and provide important information about a learner's reading skills.

It is possible to do this by "on the spot" reading activities which do not take much time and which give everyone an idea where to start.

1. Getting started: Informal reading assessment

Reading is an active process

Reading assessment needs to be an active process.

To assess reading strategies effectively, tutors should watch and listen to learners while they read. Involve learners in this process. A way to do this is to complete a reading assessment that allows learners to assist you in determining their reading levels, strengths and weaknesses.

Completing an informal reading assessment

Here is a step-by-step guide for completing an informal reading assessment.

1. Select materials from each of the four levels – A through D. Place the materials in four separate areas, each area containing materials from only one level.

2. Ask the people being assessed to take 20 minutes or more to review the four areas and to select:
   - something which they can read easily.
   - something which they would find difficult to read.

   Let people browse through the materials on their own. This removes some of the embarrassment they may feel about their reading difficulties.

   Tell them that they will be asked to read the selections aloud and in private. Allow time for them to read through what they have selected before you ask them to read it to you. This is helpful in determining their top level of reading ability.

3. Once the items have been selected, have learners read the material selected to you. Explain what will happen during and after the reading.

   During reading – Tell them that, if they have any difficulties when they are reading, you will encourage them to do what they ordinarily do when they get stuck. You will not help them during this time because you want to hear what kinds of things they do when they read.

   After reading – Explain to them that they will be asked to tell you about what they have read at the end of the reading. People will appreciate this information. A "no-surprises" approach will go a long way in building a trusting relationship. Nobody likes to feel judged.

   Explain that you will discuss your thoughts with them on their reading strengths and weaknesses.

4. Begin reading the easiest piece. If possible, listen to the whole text while they read aloud. You may want to use the system for marking reading strategies detailed in Chapter 1. If the text is too long, have people read a section which can be easily separated from the rest of the story. This could be several sentences, a paragraph, a one or two-page chapter from a book or a section of a magazine.

If the selected texts seem too difficult, the person being assessed may want to go back to the materials and choose something else.

Some people may have trouble reading any of the material. If this is the case, ask them to tell you something about themselves while you write down a few sentences using the *Language Experience* approach detailed in the Activities Section. You will know they are Level A readers.

Level A - Beginning Level

People who are reading at this level can manage bits of the following kinds of material, but are not independent readers.

- Familiar Fiction
- Learning Kits
- Basic Banking Items
- Signs
- Labels
- Advertisements
- Learner Written Material
- Easy-to-Read Newspapers
- Familiar Non-fiction

Level B - Basic Level

People who are reading at this level may be able to read bits of the following kinds of materials independently.

- Advertisements
- Learner Written Material
- Easy-to-Read Newspapers
- Familiar Non-fiction
- Familiar Fiction
- Learning Kits
- Basic Banking Items
- Daily Newspaper

Level C - Intermediate Level

People who are reading at this level are able to read sections of the following kinds of materials.

- Newspapers
- Non-fiction
- Familiar Fiction
- Magazines
- Learning Kits
- Learner Written Materials

Level D - Pre-GED Level

People who are reading at this level are able to read sections of the following kinds of materials independently.

- Newspapers
- Non-fiction
- Familiar Fiction
- Magazines

2. Determining reading strategies: Informal reading assessment

During the informal assessment, tutors, instructors, teachers and the people being assessed will need to determine and record reading strengths and weaknesses.

The following questions can be used to help determine reading strengths and weaknesses.

- What reading strategies did people use when they read a difficult part of the text? Fill in the *Reading Strategies Used* chart at the end of this chapter. Refer to Chapter 1 for more information about reading strategies.
- What reading strategies helped people understand the text they read?
- What reading strategies did not help people understand the text they read?

Generally, poor readers limit themselves and use only a few reading strategies. More fluent readers use a range of strategies.

Use the charts to improve fluency

- Go over the charts at the end of the chapter carefully with learners. Discuss their views on what good reading is all about.
- Emphasize that, although there are many reading strategies, the object of reading is to understand what is being read. Together, identify the strategies they use to get meaning from the text.
- Consider using some new reading strategies. Encourage them to use a variety of strategies when they read.
- Use assisted and choral reading activities to reinforce the use of effective reading strategies. Look in the Activities Section for a complete description of *Choral Reading* and *Assisted Reading*.

3. Guidelines for assessing adult literacy materials

To provide adult learners with materials that are appropriate to their needs, goals and interests, consider the following factors when selecting materials:

Content – the subject matter

- Is the material relevant and of interest to adults?
- Does the text present a logical order of events?
- Does the material respect the dignity of adult learners?

Style and approach – the language

- Is the language of the text clear and straightforward?
- Have you examined the text to identify any possible race, sex or class biases?

Format – the design and layout

- Does the material make effective use of visuals and layout?
- Do the graphics provide clues to information in the text?
- Is the material presented in a form and type that is easy to read?

Usefulness - the information

- Is the information presented useful to the reader?
- Do the materials maintain the reader's interest?

* Adapted from the Curriculum Working Group, Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy.

Reading Strategies Used

Name: Date:

Reading Strategies Used	Always	Sometimes	Never	Does it work?
stops and wants to give up				
sounds out each letter				
skips over the difficult part but doesn't reread or self-correct				
tries to sound out word but makes up non-words based upon the sounds, eg. nayf for nation				
substitutes another word based upon the letters, eg. was for went				
substitutes another word based upon parts of the word, eg. foot for foolish				
substitutes a word that looks similar to the unknown word				
leaves off part of the word, eg. start for started				
reads quickly leaving out word endings or parts of words				
sounds out words or parts while thinking of the context				
uses picture clues to make predictions				
substitutes another word based upon the meaning of the word, eg. pony for horse				
skips over the difficult part, reads ahead until meaning is clear, then rereads and self-corrects				
Add others				

Feelings About Reading

Name: Date:

	Always	Sometimes	Never
very hesitant or nervous			
reads as if it is a job which has to be done			
easily frustrated when reading - what happens then?			
confident with some of the material - what kinds of materials?			
enjoys reading - what kinds of materials?			

Comments

feelings about reading have changed - how?

Retelling to Show Comprehension

Name: Date:

Comprehension	Always	Sometimes	Never
Recognizes: main ideas and supporting details			
sequence of events			
cause (why) and effect (what happened) or problems and solutions			
Expresses: opinions and gives reasons for these opinions			
Reads: "between the lines" to make inferences about ideas not obvious in text			

Retelling

Comments:

Tells about what was read in own words

Summary of Reading Progress

Name: Date:

	Comments:
Reading strengths	
Reading weaknesses	
Reading goals	

Chapter 7

How Can Writing Strategies Be Determined?

Determining a person's writing strategies is also a difficult process. The same feelings and questions talked about in the previous chapter on determining reading strategies are just as strong when determining writing strategies.

We need to try to understand what people do while they write. To do this we need to watch writers while they write. Only then can we discuss and plan ways to improve writing.

1. Getting started: Informal writing assessment

Writing is an active process.

Writing assessment needs to be an active process.

1.1 Three easy and supportive ways to assess writing strategies

Written Conversation

Written conversation is a conversation on paper. Write down a question that you might ask in regular conversation. This could be about something that was just read during the reading assessment. If you are in a workplace setting, you might ask questions about work. If the program is in a community centre, you might ask questions about the community or how they found out about the program. Learners then write a reply. Encourage learners to write some questions for you to answer as well.

Try this question and answer activity for as long as possible, although 10 minutes should be sufficient for the first time.

Learners may get stuck and ask you to spell certain words. Let them know that the program will help them to improve their spelling skills over time. For now, it is necessary to know what spelling they can do. Ask them to write the best they can independently.

If learners still seem hesitant, suggest that they put down the sounds that they hear or the letters that they think are in the word. See *Written Conversation* in the Activities Section for more information about written conversations and Chapter 8 for more information about spelling.

Writing Samples

A number of learners may need to be assessed at one time with no possibility of accommodating a one-to-one writing activity such as written conversation.

One way to assess a group of people is to ask them to write as much as they can about a particular topic. This could be a topic of their choice or an assigned topic. If the group has just finished reading a passage or short text (as outlined in the previous chapter on reading assessment) ask them to write a short summary of what they have read.

You may also provide the group with a newspaper photo and ask them to write about what they think is happening in the photo. Provide plenty of scrap paper for rough work. If possible, keep the scrap paper with the finished sentences or paragraphs. This will help you to determine how learners organize their thoughts. Make yourself available – sit down with the learners and provide assistance where necessary.

Interest Surveys

An interest survey can be used for both group and one-to-one assessment. The survey helps you to assess writing skills and to determine where learners' interests lie.

You can make up your own interest survey or use the one on the following page. Read through the questions with learners before they write a response. Give them time alone to write down their responses.

Interest Survey

1. What things would you like to be able to do that you can't do now?

2. Do you have to read or write at home? In the community? At work?

   What are some of the things that you read and write?

   What would you like to be able to read and write with more confidence?

3. Do you need to use math at home? In the community? At work? What are some of the things you work on? When would you like to be able to use math with more confidence?

4. Do you have much spare time?

   What are some of the things that you do in your spare time?

2. Determining writing strategies: Informal writing assessment

After learners have finished writing, they will want to discuss their writing with you. Learners will probably ask you what you think about their writing strengths and weaknesses.

Use the information below to assist you with your response.

2.1 Watch carefully while people write

What parts of the writing process cause problems, and how are these problems solved? Use the charts at the end of this chapter to record and understand writing strengths and weaknesses.

2.2 Use writing charts to discuss writing strategies and to improve writing fluency

- Go over the writing charts at the end of this chapter with learners. Ask them what they think good writing is all about. You may also want to refer to the initial interview questions about concepts of writing.
- Emphasize that, although there are many writing skills, the object of writing is to communicate our ideas to others and to ourselves. Together, identify any writing steps which helped them to put their ideas down clearly.
- Consider using some new writing steps. Encourage learners to get their ideas down before they worry about spelling and grammar. Many people don't write because they are poor spellers and yet the reason they are poor spellers is often because they don't write!
- Use the suggestions outlined in Chapter 2 to improve the content and organization of the writing.
- Discuss spelling strategies used. What strategies do learners use when they have to write an unknown word? Refer to Chapter 8 for suggestions on improving spelling skills.

3. Improving writing

3.1 Once people are writing, how can we help them to improve the content of their work?

Start by talking about something they have written. This could be the writing sample completed earlier and can be any length – from a sentence to a paragraph.

Work together to figure out how the piece of writing is organized. Look for:

- interesting ideas
- sequence of ideas
- places where you can really see or feel what is going on
- interesting parts which you would like to know more about – parts which invite you to ask questions
- opposing ideas, differences of opinion and points of view
- confusing sections which invite you to ask questions
- sentence and paragraph structure

Now, discuss how the piece of writing could be improved.

Can ideas be added?

Tutors/instructors might ask:

- What is the main idea expressed in this passage?
- Can you give more details about this idea?
- You seem to make many interesting points, but it is not always clear how you get from one idea to the next. Could we add some points to join the ideas together?
- There are many other situations which are similar to this. Could you add some of these?
- Perhaps you could add a summary of what you wrote about and why it was important to write about this?

Can ideas be deleted?

Tutors/instructors might ask:

- This point seems to be repeated a few times. Can we take out the repetitions?
- Some of this information does not seem to be about your topic. Can we go through it again and take out any parts which don't seem to belong? Maybe we can make a new section about these different points?

Can ideas be moved around?

Tutors/instructors might say:

- You seem to tell about the main idea down in the middle of the piece. Can we move it to the beginning where people will notice it more?
- This paragraph has many good ideas, but some tell different kinds of information. Perhaps we could move these ideas into separate paragraphs?
- There seem to be a number of related ideas in many places. Why don't we move them together?"

3.2 Writing Evaluation Survey

One instructor used the following evaluation survey to ask a group of learners how they would like to have their writing evaluated. Their comments gave the instructor a clear picture of the feedback the group would find useful in improving their writing skills.

Writing Evaluation Survey

1. I would like to comment on the writing you hand in. What things would you like me to point out?

2. Would you prefer I wrote my comments on your paper or on a separate sheet of paper?

3. How often would you like me to comment on your writing?

4. What writing skills do you find the most difficult?

5. What writing skills do you find easier?

4. Conclusion

Use the initial interview questions, the reading assessment and the writing samples to determine where to begin.

You now have quite a bit of information to help you plan. Using the initial interview and the informal assessments, consider:

- approximately what level people are working at with their reading, writing and math.
- what seem to be some of the obvious strengths and weaknesses in reading, writing and math.

Be prepared to find a range between people's reading, writing and math skills. Most people read better than they write. This is because they usually need to read more frequently than they need to write. Math skills may also be at a completely different level.

Use the level guide description in Chapter 5 to determine approximately where learners are with their reading, writing and math. The level guide will also assist you in finding a good place to begin and will provide information about resource materials and learning activities.

Getting Ideas Down

Name: Date:

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Confident to think of ideas. Is assistance necessary?			
Organizes ideas by: • discussing • making notes • brainstorming			
Stays on topic			
Writes ideas with ease			
Mainly concerned with: • composing • spelling • handwriting			

Comments

Quantity of writing

Improving the Content of Writing Through Revisions

Name: Date:

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Considers who will read the text: writes for a specific audience			
Recognizes how the ideas are organized - can "map out" how the ideas connect			
Expands ideas			
Makes changes by: • adding ideas on the end • inserting new ideas • deleting words or ideas • rearranging the order of the ideas			

Improving the Mechanics of Writing Through Editing

Name: Date:

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Punctuation periods			
question marks			
commas			
quotation marks			
brackets and dashes			
exclamation marks			
apostrophes			
Letter Formation (script or printed) correct letter formation of lower case letters			
correct letter formation of capital letters			

Spelling - see Chapter 8
Grammar - see Chapter 9

Kinds of Writing

This is a list of possibilities, not a checklist to work through. This chart may help you to broaden the kinds of writing that you try to do.

Name: Date:

Kinds of Writing:	**Comments:**
Lists	
Captions for familiar pictures or diagrams, eg. photo albums	
Brainstorms	
Sentences - writes ideas in complete sentences	
Paragraphs - expands single ideas into complete sentences	
Letters - personal and business	
Bills and cheques	
Application forms	
Messages - eg. phone messages, notes to children	
Journals or diaries	
Lists - eg. grocery lists	
Note-taking - eg. takes notes about what was read, from interviews	
Reports - writes ideas, sentences, paragraphs into logical order, includes detail and accurate information	
Reports or longer writing with sections or chapters - uses table of contents, logical sequence and organization	

Summary of Writing Skills

Name: Date:

	Comments:
Writing strengths	
Writing weaknesses	
Writing goals	

Chapter 8

Some Things That Are Known About Spelling

Many people have difficulty spelling. Tutors and instructors may wonder how spelling should be taught. Do people need to know all the spelling rules? Do they need to know all the sounds? To answer these questions, we need to consider how people spell.

1. How do people spell?

Spelling words in English is not an easy task. English is not a perfectly spelled language. Letters can take on different sounds

- depending on the word in which they occur:
  /ou/: cough, bough, tough, through, though
  /ho/: hot, honey, hope, honest, horizon
- and the context in which the word occurs:
  read: Read to the child, it brought on sleep. Read this article today.
  tears: The tears in the sail brought tears to the sailor's eyes.

Words are not always spelled as they sound. Many spelling rules have exceptions. People spell by doing more than just learning spelling rules and their exceptions.

1.1 People spell by reading and writing

Learning to spell takes a lot of practice. Unfortunately, practice often means memorizing word lists and spelling words orally. These are not the most effective ways to learn to spell.

Word lists present the word without presenting its meaning. The words on the list often do not have anything to do with the person's life. This makes the process of learning to spell more difficult. Spelling becomes an abstract activity that is not connected to where the person lives or works, nor to what his or her interests are.

Spelling words orally is also an abstract activity. Outside of spelling bees, people are not required to spell words orally. Spelling is only important to writing, not to speaking.

Good practice in terms of learning how to spell takes place when people read and write, not when they memorize word lists or spell words orally.

1.2 People spell by knowing when they misspell

The difficult part of spelling is being able to recognize if a word is spelled correctly or not. Once you recognize that a word is spelled incorrectly, the correct spelling can be found or figured out using a variety of methods and sources.

Finding incorrectly spelled words is not always easy and is not something that many people have been taught or trained to do. Many adults have been raised in school environments where the teachers were the editors. The work was handed in and returned corrected (as if by magic), or with the spelling errors marked. This process did not allow people to identify their own spelling mistakes.

Now these people find themselves in embarrassing situations at work or in public having to hand in forms or reports and not knowing if the words are spelled correctly.

People who spell well are able to overcome these situations somewhat by identifying incorrectly spelled words independently.

1.3 People spell by separating spelling from composing

In Chapter 2, we discussed how fluent writers separate editing from composing. They do this so that they can get their thoughts down before making changes to the written text. For them, writing is a lot more than having the words spelled correctly; it is expressing their thoughts clearly.

Many adults who come to an upgrading program do not separate spelling from writing. This often means that they do not write because they cannot spell. Unfortunately, they cannot spell because they do not write. People who spell well break this cycle by writing first and then checkin, their spelling later.

1.4 People spell by looking for patterns

Word patterns enable people to notice the relationships between clusters of letters and the clusters of sounds they represent. These patterns include prefixes, suffixes, root words, word endings, sound patterns, etc. People use these patterns to help them spell.

1.5 People spell by visualizing the word

While some words in English are spelled as they sound (map, can, spot), many are not (tough, minute, does). These words can be spelled correctly only through visual memory.

People learn these words by seeing a picture of the word in their mind, by tracing the word on a surface, or by using the word in their writing. In each instance they have a visual image of the word.

1.6 People spell by using a dictionary and other aids

People use dictionaries to help them check the spelling of a word. Some people use other spelling aids such as the newspaper, a book, the telephone directory or the advice of a friend.

The important thing is that they refer to something or someone before they give up. Many people who have difficulty spelling either give up or choose a simpler word.

1.7 People spell by applying rules

There are a number of spelling generalizations that people may use to help isolate and approach spelling difficulties. These include homonyms, the *i* before *e* except after *c* rule, the *y* to *i* rule, etc. These rules assist people to spell particular words.

2. Some ideas for teaching spelling

There are no magical ways to improve spelling. No doubt, people will want and need to try a number of ways to remember difficult words. However, a few tips may make this process easier for tutors and instructors, as well as for learners.

2.1 Encourage people to read and write

Spelling instruction should always be placed in the context of reading and writing. Tutors, instructors and teachers should not rely solely on spelling lists and workbook exercises.

Start with words the learner needs to know. You may want to use words from the learner's personal dictionary or from a written conversation. Encourage the learner to use these words in sentences and in shared writing activities. Expand on these words with ones that have similar meanings or sounds. Encourage the learner to look for these words when reading.

2.2 Encourage people to identify their own spelling mistakes

When the learner has finished writing, encourage him/her to look for words which s/he feels are misspelled. Tell the learner to underline these words. They can then be looked up in the dictionary or checked using other printed material. This should become a natural part of the writing process.

I WORK IN HALIfax.
I AM A CLEANER I WORK IN THE ① BASMENT
WITH ANOTHER WORKER I ~~am~~ LOVE TO ② TEES
HIM A LOT. HE ~~WORK~~ ③ LIKS TO ACT THE FOOL

1. Basement
2. Tease
3. Likes

Correcting the words which people want and need to spell correctly is a much more useful way to improve spelling than trying to learn a list of words that someone else has decided is important to know how to spell. Not only will learners feel more motivated to learn words they need to use, but spelling will improve more rapidly.

2.3 Teach people to separate spelling from composing

As people write, they may have trouble spelling a word. A tutor or instructor might say, "Put it down as best as you can. Put it down as you think it sounds." (if the writer is good at learning by sounds), or "Put it down as you think it looks." (if the writer tends to notice how words look). Learners should mark these attempts by underlining them. Tell them that you will come back to the word later when the composing is finished.

This separation of composing from spelling will benefit learners. They will feel free to concentrate on their ideas and to use their full range of adult vocabulary. They will take more risks when they write. They will no longer feel restrained to write only what they can spell. They will get the message that good writing is very different from good spelling.

For example, a woman was writing about selling vegetables. She wrote, "At the end of the day you may have to ~~nego~~take a lower price so you don't end up taking home vegetables with you." She confessed that she wanted to put "negotiate" but, because she didn't know how to spell the word, she opted for the phrase "take a lower price" instead. Once she realized that it was alright to make spelling errors in her rough draft, she became a more relaxed and confident writer.

2.4 Teach spelling patterns

Teaching word patterns enables learners to notice the relationships between clusters of letters and sounds.

Work on word families. This involves blending initial consonants with a letter grouping. For example:

-ack	**-ap**	**-ick**
tack	map	sick
jack	cap	tick

You may want to spend some time discussing rhyming before completing this activity.

- Encourage learners to identify letter clusters in longer words such as *cap* in *caption* or *tick* in *tickle*.
- Look for patterns in longer words. For example, the word carpenter has the letter clusters car/pen/ter.
- Teach learners to identify prefixes, suffixes and root words. Knowing the meaning of prefixes and suffixes further helps readers to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Here are several prefixes and suffixes commonly found in print.

Prefixes

- Level or degree: *arch*rival, *hyper*tension, *macro*-economic, *micro*scope, *super*power, *ultra*-modern
- Negation: *an*archy, *anti*social, *contra*dict, *de*grade, *dis*honest, *il*legal, *in*active, *im*moral, *ir*regular, *mal*nutrition, *mis*lead, *non*profit, *un*tie
- Number: *semi*circle, *uni*cycle, *bi*cycle, *tri*cycle, *quad*ruple
- Space, direction and time: *ante*rior, *be*low, *circum*ference, *de*scend, *ex*port, *in*side, *inter*fere, *para*llel, *peri*meter, *post*pone, *pre*dict, *retro*active, *sub*marine, *trans*fer

Suffixes

- Adjective: cap*able*, angel*ic*, grate*ful*, juven*ile*, rebell*ious*, care*less*, danger*ous*, mor*ose*, tire*some*, soap*y*
- Adverb: slow*ly*, back*ward*
- Noun: accur*acy*, stor*age*, dist*ance*, depend*ency*, diction*ary*, separa*tion*, demo*cracy*, free*dom*, mother*hood*, safe*ty*, frag*ment*, happi*ness*, eco*nomy*, friend*ship*, soli*tude*
- People: ten*ant*, employ*ee*, perform*er*, actr*ess*, histor*ian*, mechan*ic*, pian*ist*, act*or*, gang*ster*
- Verb: ident*ify*, sympath*ize*

Note: The goal of these activities is to help people with spelling and, to a lesser extent, with pronunciation. They are mini-lessons. They are **not** activities that should form the central part of the tutoring session.

2.5 Teach people to visualize words

As mentioned previously, there are many words in the English language that are not spelled as they sound. These words can be spelled correctly only through visual memory.

For many people, visualizing the word in their mind may be difficult. Many of us visualize words by writing them down. To assist visualization, encourage learners to write the word as they say it. Saying the word as it is written may also help learners to identify various parts of the word.

Flash cards can also be used to assist visualization of irregularly spelled words. Flash cards that are prepared by the learner and the tutor are more useful than those that are commercially prepared. Commercially prepared cards most often contain words that are not relevant to the learner and his/her community and do not allow the learner to write his/her own words – a process that helps spelling.

2.6 Teach people to use a dictionary and other aids

To correct spelling, people can:

- find and copy the word from their personal dictionary.
- find and copy the word from a book or article.
- look the word up in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory. This handy guide often has pictures to help people find words.
- ask someone who may know how the word is spelled.
- use a variety of dictionaries including some easy-to-read dictionaries. Most regular dictionaries are almost useless for people with spelling difficulties. To say, "look the word up in a dictionary" works for people who are choosing between two or three choices of spellings. However, the dictionary is almost impossible to use for people who do not know where to begin to look for a particular word Developing a personal dictionary first helps people to develop the necessary skills to use a regular dictionary.

You can assist people in using the dictionary by asking the following questions:

"What sound does the word start with?"

"What letter stands for that sound?"

"Which is the most likely letter?"

2.7 Teach people spelling rules and guidelines

There are a number of rules and guidelines which learners may find useful when spelling.

The doubling rule: When adding an ending to a one syllable word that ends in one consonant after one vowel, double the final consonant if the ending begins with a vowel (sit / sitting, stop / stopping).

The *i e – e i* rule: **I** before **e** except after **c** or when sounding like **ay** as in neighbour and weigh.

The *y* to *i* rule: If a word ends in **y** preceded by a consonant, change the **y** to **i** when adding an ending (steady/steadiness) except when the ending is **ing.** In this case the **y** is retained (study/studying). If a word ends in a **y** preceded by a vowel, the **y** doesn't change when adding an ending (buy/buyer, say/saying).

The final *e* rule: If a word ends in a silent **e**, drop the **e** before adding an ending that starts with a vowel (hope/hoped, dance/dancing). Exceptions to this rule include words such as hoeing and courageous.

Forming plurals: When forming plurals, add an **s**, unless you cannot hear the **s** at the end of the word, such as in words ending with **sh, ch, s , x, z,** then add **es** (glass/glasses, roach/roaches).

Homonyms: Homonyms are words that sound the same but have different meanings. These words are not difficult to spell but, because they sound the same, they often cause spelling mistakes. Here are some homonyms that are often misspelled.

bare, bear
by, buy, bye
brake, break
dear, deer
eight, ate
here, hear
hole, whole
hour, our
knot, not
know, no
lone, loan
maid, made
male, mail
meat, meet
one, won
past, passed
piece, peace
read, red
rode, road, rowed
right, write
see, sea
site, sight, cite
son, sun
stair, stare
steak, stake
steal, steel
their, there, they're
threw, through
to, too, two
wait, weight
weak, week
wood, would
your, you're

2.8 Encourage people to figure out how they spell words

Learners need to understand what they do when they spell. This will help them to develop spelling strategies. Encourage learners to complete the following spelling charts to figure out what they do when they spell. Look for any patterns in these spelling attempts.

Consider:

- What did the spellers focus on while spelling? See *Identifying Spelling Strategies* chart on next page.
- What happens if they get stuck? Is there any system or series of steps followed in order to figure the word out?
- Are there any patterns to peculiar spelling habits – i.e. some people add extra letters because they know that the word is longer but they don't know what letters are right. This is known as the "if in doubt, add a favourite letter" syndrome.

As time passes consider:

- Are people's learning styles taken into consideration when learning new words? Some people may recall words more easily if they can draw them, visualize them, hear them, say them, etc.
- Do spellers get enough opportunity to self-correct their work for spelling mistakes?
- Do poor spellers use a personal dictionary to learn and reinforce correct spelling?

For more information about spelling, *Helping Adults to Spell,* by Catherine Morehouse, is available through the regional Literacy Resource Centre.

Identifying Spelling Strategies

Compare your spelling of the word with the correct spelling. Check those things you did to spell the word your way.

Name: Date:

How I spelled the word	Correct spelling
Strategies	**Comments:**
Tried to sound the word out	
Added extra letters. Why?	
Left out letters. Which ones? Why? eg. vowels	
Visualized and then wrote familiar parts of the word	
Tried to write the word by thinking of word parts	
Wrote small/messy to hide unsure spelling	
Left off word endings or beginnings	
Mixed letters up	
Added or forgot final "e"	
Others (list)	

Overcoming Spelling Problems

Name: Date:

	Effectiveness
Finds spelling mistakes independently	
Separates spelling from composing	
Uses spelling rules to identify misspelled words	
Uses personal dictionary	
Works on word families	
Uses word endings and beginnings	
Visualizes the word	
Traces the word	
Writes the word	
Uses regular dictionary to check spelling	
Others	

Chapter 9

Some Things That Are Known About Grammar

There is no doubt that knowledge of grammar is essential to communication. This knowledge may be implicit; that is, people may know when a sentence sounds right even if they do not know the grammatical parts, or it may be explicit, whereby people know the grammatical parts of the sentence.

For most of us, it is implicit knowledge which allows us to communicate in a grammatically correct manner. People who attend a literacy and upgrading program bring with them this implicit knowledge of grammar. They often know when a sentence sounds right. What sounds right, however, is not always grammatically correct. Tutors and instructors need to tap into this implicit knowledge to help explain these instances. To do this, they need to understand how people learn grammar.

1. How do people learn grammar?

People learn grammar in a variety of ways. They learn it through listening. They learn it through speaking. They learn it through writing. They learn it through reading. This learning provides them with an understanding of grammar rules.

Grammar is about the rules of language. But it is more than just knowing them – it is just as much about discovering what these rules are and how they are used. In fact, what we traditionally call grammar is really just a small part of the subject. Most of grammar is about how people communicate – how they structure words, sounds and symbols into meaning – rather than a list of rules.

To assist learners in understanding grammar, tutors and instructors need to spend time discussing how people communicate. This means that learning grammar should focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing. For example, a tutor and learner could write and then read a written conversation. A discussion could then follow focusing on the structure of the questions and answers in the written conversation. This activity incorporates listening, speaking, reading and writing which is the way we learn grammar.

2. Common grammar problems

The following is a list of some of the most common grammar problems encountered by adult learners.

2.1 Sentence completion

When is a sentence really a sentence? Try using the **Who** is doing **What** idea. If learners understand that every sentence must have a who that is doing something (what), they may be able to overcome the tendency of writing incomplete sentences. Explain to learners that sentences, no matter what their length, can be divided into two parts.

- One part names the person, place or thing being talked about. This is the **who** part of the sentence.
- The other part of the sentence gives information about this person, place or thing. This is the **what** part of the sentence.

If either part is missing, the sentence is incomplete. For Level A and B learners, there is probably no benefit in using the terms subject and predicate to describe the "who" and the "what".

2.2 Subject/verb agreement

In language, subjects and verbs disagree when they are a different number.

ie. Mom and Dad **has** visited Louisburg, Nova Scotia.
There **is** two musicians playing in the street.

In these sentences, the subjects and verbs disagree. To make them agree, they have to be the same number. If there is only one person or thing which is the subject, the verb must be singular. If there are two or more people or things which are the subject, the verb must be plural.

Cloze exercises based on the writing of learners and which leave out the verb are effective tools for promoting subject/verb agreement.

2.3 Capitalization

Some learners, especially at the A and B levels, have a tendency to confuse upper and lower case letter usage. Capitals, for example, may be used to emphasize what is important rather than to indicate the start of a sentence. Tutors and instructors should look for patterns of upper and lower case letter use to see if there is a unique rule like this being used.

For learners at the A and B levels, introduce the more basic capitalization rules first.

- capitals at the first of a sentence
- capitals for place names and people

Use other learner-produced material that has been published or short articles to explain the difference between upper and lower case letters. Encourage learners to write the alphabet in upper and lower case letters on the first page of their personal dictionary.

As time passes, teach learners to use capitals for the following:

- the pronoun **I**
- names of days and months (Wednesday, March 20)
- proper names – people, organizations, companies, towns, cities, countries, rivers, etc. (Billy White, Consumer Affairs, International Tire, Halifax, Canada, River Philip)
- abbreviations of titles before proper names (Mr., Ms., Dr., Rev.)
- languages (French, German, Spanish)
- religions (Catholicism, Buddhism)
- nationalities (Irish, Canadian)
- titles of books, films, songs, etc. (The Mockingbird, Farewell to Nova Scotia)
- parts of addresses (542 Prince Street, R.R. #2, Oxford)

2.4 Verb tense

Some people mix the past and present tense when writing. When discussing verb tense and the errors made in a passage, tutors and instructors should talk about time and not tense. Point out that just as we use different verb forms when speaking to indicate the time of a particular event, we use different verb forms when writing to indicate the time of events.

Draw a time line to show how verb tense works. Take a written conversation and put present tense verbs in the past tense and past tense verbs in the present tense. Discuss the differences.

2.5 The ed and ing form of the verb

These endings are often left off the verb both in reading and writing. This happens at Levels A through D. Use cloze exercises to help learners focus on these verb forms.

ie. Yesterday I walk __ to the store.
He is go __ to the concert.

Look through other writing and note where and why various verb forms are used.

Take a sample of the learner's writing and change the time of the events. Have the learner re-write the story using the correct verb form.

Prepare sentences that illustrate the use of the **ed** and **ing** ending.

ie. I **work** at the corner store. Yesterday, I **worked** for over nine hours.
After **working** for nine hours, I went home.

2.6 Pronoun agreement

Pronouns are often hard for learners to master. Learners may confuse subject and object pronouns.

Unless the fog lifts, the girls and **us (we)** will not be driving.

They may use pronouns that do not agree in number with the noun that they replace:

No one can find **their (his or her)** ticket to tonight's game.

To make pronouns easier to understand, have learners consider each pronoun separately to make sure it is the correct form. Consider the example:

Unless the fog lifts, the girls and **us (we)** will not be driving.

Try each separately. You would never say, "Us will not be driving."

A chart showing pronouns as "whos" and pronouns as "whats" can also be used. Remind learners that **subject pronouns** (I, you, he, she, it, we, they) carry out the action of the verb and answer the question "who?". **Object pronouns** (me, you, him, her, it, us, them) receive the action of the verb and answer the question "what?".

> Maurice hit the tree. Maurice is the "who"; the tree is the "what".
>
> **He** hit the tree. (He is the "who".)
> Maurice hit **it.** (It is the "what".)

To ensure pronoun agreement, ask learners to draw an arrow from the pronoun to the noun for which it stands.

> The manager asked the **workers** for **their** product report.
>
> The manager asked the **worker** for **her** product report.

Base these exercises on texts learners have written or write sentences together.

2.7 Commas

This is the punctuation mark that has the greatest number of uses. It is also one of the most difficult punctuation marks to use correctly. When presenting commas, you may want to group their usage under three headings:

Use commas to separate items in a series

> I bought milk, jam, eggs and bread at the store.

Use commas after introductory words and phrases

> Yesterday, I walked to the river bank.
> After eating dinner, we went to the movies.

Use commas to set off words or phrases which are inserted into a complete sentence.

> My car, a Ford, never seems to run when I need it most.
> My house, located on the east side of the river, needs to be painted.

Talk about commas as pauses in a sentence. Use examples which make sense to the individual. Look for how commas are used in other texts. Circle them and then try to figure out why the writer put them there.

Do some writing with the learner frequently and explain why you put in commas.

As time passes, introduce other comma rules. Here are several common ones.

Use commas before and after direct quotations in a sentence.

"Times look tough," she said. Her friend replied, "It sure isn't easy to make ends meet."

Use commas to separate dates, addresses and years.

On December 6, 1911, two ships collided in Halifax Harbour.

Use commas to separate a series of words that describe the same word.

It looks like it will be a long, cold, stormy winter.

Use commas before conjunctions (but, like, or, not, yet) that join two complete parts of a sentence. Commas used this way indicate that new information is coming.

Ann and Billy cooked supper, but I helped wash the dishes.

2.8 Joining and transitional words

Some learners have trouble getting past writing simple sentences. Tutors, instructors and teachers need to show them how they can join two short sentences using a conjunction or joining word. The most common conjunctions are:

and, but, yet, for, or, nor

And joins similar ideas.
I took the exam. I passed the exam.
I took the exam and passed it.

But joins two ideas which oppose each other.
The food tasted good. The vegetables were too soggy.
The food tasted good, but the vegetables were too soggy.

Note: The following example shows an inappropriate use of the joining word **but.** Here, two unrelated, unopposed ideas are joined together.

"Some herring or shrimp could be caught with a line, but you could not eat them."

Yet joins two ideas which seem to be different but are, in fact, both true.
The cat was sleepy. His eyes were half open.
The cat was sleepy, yet his eyes were half open.

Other joining words and phrases include:

however, therefore, as a result, furthermore, in addition

However joins two ideas which seem to be in contrast but are, in fact, related.
Acid rain is a serious problem. The American and Canadian governments do not seem to be willing to deal with it.
Acid rain is a serious problem; however, the American and Canadian governments do not seem to be willing to deal with it.

Note: The following example incorrectly opposes two similar statements.

"Acid rain is a serious problem; however, the state of the environment should be given real consideration."

Therefore and **as a result** answer the reader's questions about what effects resulted from a situation.
The sun was very hot. We stopped at an ice-cream store.
The sun was very hot; therefore, we stopped at an ice-cream store.

Furthermore and **in addition** strengthen and add to your case when you are trying to persuade the reader to agree with you.
Many adult upgrading courses are offered through community centres. Upgrading programs can also be successfully run in the workplace.
Many adult upgrading courses are offered through community centres. Furthermore, upgrading programs can be successfully run in the workplace.

For C and D level writers, provide a list of transitional words to help their writing become more fluid. Introduce these words in the context of the learners' writings. Words such as **however, although, moreover, whereas,** etc. will help learners express more complex thoughts.

2.9 Apostrophes

Many learners feel uncomfortable using the apostrophe. They leave it out of contractions or use it to denote the plural form instead of the possessive form.

Contractions

Explain that contractions are two words which have been shortened (contracted) into one word by removing one or two letters. The apostrophe simply replaces the letters which have been removed.

Many learners use contractions when speaking, but have difficulty using them when writing. To assist them in understanding how contractions are used:

- Write a list of words from which contractions are formed. List the words in one column and then write the contractions in another column.

are + not	aren't
they + will	they'll
I + will	I'll

- Ask learners to read through the first column and then ask them how they might say the two words when speaking.
- Point out that, when we speak, we often join these words together by dropping some of the letters. The apostrophe is the sign we use when writing to show which letters were dropped.

Plurals

The plural form of most nouns – people, places or things – is noted by adding an **s** on the end of the word. When the noun ends in s, x, sh or ch, the plural is usually formed by adding **es.**

Use texts written by the learner or create sentences together which use plural nouns. Explain that the apostrophe is **not** used to show that something is plural.

Showing possession

The apostrophe is only used with an "s" (singular: 's and plural: s') to show that something belongs to someone or something.

An effective way to demonstrate possession is to ask learners to create their family tree or that of a well known family (T.V., royalty). Ask them to identify the relationships illustrated in the tree by using the format **X** is **X's** brother-in-law.

X is **X's** sister.
X is **X's** uncle.

Develop cloze exercises that leave out apostrophes and others which leave out plural endings. When learners feel more at ease with both forms, develop cloze exercises which leave out both apostrophes and plural endings.

Note

It's is a contraction of it is.
Its shows possession and does not require an apostrophe.

- It's a nice day.
- The dog is wearing its collar.

His, hers, theirs, ours, yours do **not** require an apostrophe to show possession.

2.10 Double negative

This is a very common error which is usually transferred from speech to written language. Initially, tutors and instructors should correct double negatives only in writing, not in speech. Have the learner read the corrected version to you. Often s/he will comment on the change, providing you with an opportunity to explain proper use of the negative form.

Note: Double negatives most often result from colloquial expression. Tutors and instructors may want to discuss the difference between formal writing, informal writing and speech.

Identifying Grammar Skills

Name: Date:

Commonly used grammar skills	Always	Sometimes	Never
Uses commas			
to separate items in a series			
after introductory words and phrases			
to set off inserted words or phrases			
Uses transition and joining words			
and, but, or, nor			
although, however, moreover			
Uses verb endings			
ing			
ed			
others			
Uses apostrophes correctly for			
possession			
contractions			
Corrects double negatives			
Pronouns agree with verbs			
Uses complete sentences			
Subjects and verbs agree			
Keeps a consistent verb tense			
Uses capital letters correctly			
Others			

Overcoming Grammar Problems

Name: Date:

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Finds grammar mistakes independently			
Refers to examples put into a personal dictionary			
Uses workbook examples as mini-lessons and applies this to own work			
Uses reference guides			
Others			

Chapter 10

How To Plan Each Session

As with any new experience, getting started is always the most difficult thing to do. Although tutors and instructors may understand how reading, writing and math should be approached and they may even have a number of specific activities in hand, it is often hard to pull all this information together for each session.

1. Setting goals

Goal setting is the axle of a successful learning environment. Tutors and instructors who sit down with learners and help them to set realistic learning goals have already accomplished a great deal. They have established an atmosphere of trust. They have included learners in the planning process. They have given learners the opportunity to take charge of their own learning. Together, they have created goals and objectives imperative for effective lesson planning.

When setting goals with learners, consider these suggestions:

1. Ask learners what they hope to accomplish by participating in the program/ tutoring situation. Ask them which skills they would like to work on during the sessions. It may be useful to record this discussion in the form of a brainstorm. This way learners can see how their goals relate to each other.
2. Divide their goals into three categories:
   long-range
   mid-range
   short- range or immediate goals.
3. Over a period of several sessions, develop a tentative timetable showing how these goals will be worked on and met.
4. For each goal, work with learners to determine what they already know or have done to reach the goal and what remains to know and be done. In this way, you build on their present knowledge and help them to identify their strengths.
5. Record this information on the charts provided at the end of this chapter or on ones you develop yourself. Keep these charts in a file folder where you keep other work samples.

Approaching each goal in this manner helps to develop a list of objectives on which individual lesson plans can be based.

2. Developing a lesson plan

Now that you have some idea of what the person's goals are, you need to plan lessons that will allow the learner to meet these goals. When planning a lesson, there are several questions you need to ask.

- What do we hope to accomplish (goals) in this session?
- What will learners have to do in this session?
- What will I have to do in this session?
- What materials will we need?
- How will we know if we have made progress?

Some tutors, instructors and teachers find it helpful to think about the overall shape of the session. They take care to:

- start the session with something familiar
- move to more difficult work
- end with an enjoyable activity

Other instructors consider the learners' participation. They plan to:

- start with an activity which is familiar
- add new information, ideas, skills
- end with trying out these new ideas

The following schedules provide a few variations with which to begin. Each plan is based upon a 2-hour session. This is an average block of time for community or workplace instruction and covers a morning or afternoon session of a full-day program.

Basic schedule

10 minutes: Review strategies learned from previous session

10 minutes: Warm up activity
Written conversation
Choral reading

30 minutes: Main activity
Project work
Letter writing
Movie review
Photo story

10 minutes: Mini-lesson
Spelling/grammar
Punctuation

10 minutes: Break

20 minutes: Math work

10 minutes: Assisted reading

10 minutes: Wrap up and evaluation
Plan for next day
Brainstorm future session plans
Journals

When planning for very hesitant learners:

Spend most of your time and energy trying to find topics of interest. Once a topic of real interest surfaces, get as many dictated language experience texts as possible. Do a brief brainstorm every day. Again, choose a topic of importance to learners.

10 minutes: Review last day

20 minutes: Language experience

10 minutes: Written conversation

10 minutes: Mini-lesson

10 minutes : Break

30 minutes: Main activity
Project work
Role play
Shared language experience story

10 minutes: Read to learners

10 minutes: Brainstorm topics for future sessions

10 minutes: Wrap up and evaluation
Journals

For adults who want lots of traditional workbook practice, sandwich the more interesting and potentially more effective work between two traditional lessons. Develop mini-lessons (or choose 1 - 2 pages from workbooks) which deal with the problem area. Reinforce these areas during the rest of the session by applying them to real life applications.

10 minutes: Review last day

15 minutes: Mini-lesson

15 minutes: Written conversation

10 minutes: Break

10 minutes: Assisted reading

10 minutes: Mini-lesson

20 minutes: Project work

20 minutes: Math work

10 minutes: Wrap up and evaluation

It is unlikely that any one schedule will remain perfect forever. Each situation will press its own demands upon the schedule. Always consider:

- new goals that may arise.
- why you are choosing particular activities. If the activities you are using are not meeting particular goals, you need to re-evaluate what you are doing.
- if the materials you are using are related to learners' goals and knowledge.
- the role learners play in planning the session and selecting materials.

Keeping these general thoughts in mind, tutors, instructors, teachers and learners will need to try out different work patterns until everyone feels that the pace and content are effective.

The charts, *Lesson Plan* and *Lesson Comments* on the next two pages, may help you to plan and evaluate each lesson.

Lesson Plan

Name: Date: Lesson:

What do we hope to accomplish (goals) during this session?

What will the student(s) do?

What will I do?

What resource materials do we need?

How will we know if we have made progress?

Lesson Comments

Name: Date: Lesson:

How did it go?

What worked? What didn't work?

What will the student(s) do at home before the next session?

What will I do at home before the next session?

What will we do during the next session?

3. Measuring progress

Evaluating and planning go hand-in-hand. Tutors and instructors need to know how well things are going in order to plan what to try next. Learners will be anxious to see that improvements are being made and will want to set clear milestones to mark their progress.

Progress can best be measured by keeping a file folder of work completed.

3.1 File folders and record sheets

A file folder may include:

Interviews

- interviews about previous learning experiences, thoughts on reading, writing, math, etc. (see Chapter 4).

Charts

- reading charts (see Chapter 6) and copies of a marked text (see Chapter 1)
- writing and spelling charts (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 7)
- math charts (see Chapter 3)

Writing Samples

- samples of rough, unedited work. This includes written conversations, journals, rough drafts of project work, etc. **Always date all work.**

Lists of Accomplishments

- lists of books, articles, etc. read independently
- lists of books, articles, etc. read with assistance
- lists of words spelled independently
- other lists of accomplishments which are of importance to learners. For example, any certificates obtained. Be sure to record the date of each accomplishment.

Test Results

- If tests are required, file the entire test not just the marks. Tests are useful for learners if the correct answers are discussed and understood. Plans for mastering the weak areas should grow out of these discussions. If learners see only their marks and not the tests, the results benefit mostly the instructor. Knowing if they passed or failed does not assist learners in overcoming specific difficulties.

Record/Goal Sheets

- Record sheets which set specific goals to be accomplished in a certain time span should be completed jointly by tutors, instructors, teachers and learners.

Who keeps records and why?

There must be an open file policy for adult learners. This means that learners should have free access to their files. In fact, they should be adding to their files as well. Why?

- People learn more when they feel in control of their learning. This is not to say that they can do it on their own. They want and need assistance in learning, but they should be aware of the whole picture – what their strengths and weaknesses may be.
- Keeping files hidden makes people feel that you know something that they do not. This makes many people feel uncertain about their abilities and progress.
- You may think that certain items should be kept in the files and learners may want other things kept for different reasons. For example, you may be interested in the reading strategy charts, while they want to keep close watch on the spelling chart. Discussing these choices helps learners to define and set realistic goals which can be achieved.

How often should record sheets or other charts be filled out?

For most programs, monthly or six-week intervals is an appropriate period of time. You don't want people to feel inadequate or foolish by looking for results that they have not had time to accomplish. If there is no pressing need for the program to document progress more frequently, you should feel comfortable working out an individual schedule with learners.

If learners want to enter programs which require specific entrance grades, then appropriate timetables will need to be developed.

3.2 What kind of progress should be expected?

A and B level learners may find that their feelings about reading, writing and math change first. They begin to feel that they can and will learn. Their skills begin to improve after their confidence has been rejuvenated. Time and consistency are important factors for these learners.

If there is little sign of improvement after three months of working together at least two times a week, there is a problem. Take time to go through the questions relating to progress in Chapter 11.

Learners at the C and D levels often are able to read longer texts and write longer passages so their progress may seem easier to record. However, care should be taken not to get bogged down in recognizing only that progress which has been made in mechanical skill areas such as spelling, punctuation, etc.

Consider other areas such as their ability to think critically, develop and support opinions, and summarize a text read, as well as their flexibility to use these improved literacy skills in a variety of reading, writing and problem-solving situations.

If there is little sign of improvement after three months of working together at least two times a week, there is a problem. Take time to go through the questions relating to progress in Chapter 11.

3.3 How can we talk about progress with learners?

Be supportive and honest. Do not patronize. The "3 Hs" rule for evaluation goes something like this:

honesty to say what has to be said
heart to understand how people feel
humour to get everybody back up and kicking.

Talk about strengths and weaknesses. Discuss the highs and lows of the tutoring sessions. Generally, those tutoring and teaching sessions that encourage individuals to work on areas of interest will uncover strengths. These may not be related to academic skills, but are just as important to the participants, eg. carpentry skills, parenting skills, budgeting skills.

Nobody wants to feel evaluated, but everyone wants to know where they stand.

What happens if learners feel frustrated?

Working hard at reading, writing and math does not always mean that learning is easy or happens automatically. Sometimes the work gets very hard and everyone's spirits get low.

Simply saying, "Don't worry. You are doing great!" will not make these frustrations go away. Learners may say, "But I still can't SPELL!" Of course they may be right. But you also know that they are making other improvements. For example, overcoming chronic spelling difficulties may indeed need more attention (See *Personal Dictionary* in the Activities Section for one possible aid) but, in the meantime, the quantity and quality of writing may have improved dramatically.

A file folder of work samples and lists of accomplishments helps learners to build their confidence.

- Compare the work in the file folder to earlier work completed. A straight comparison of work completed is a good way to show progress.
- Note work done independently. Often learners will not be aware of the progress they have made in being able to work on their own.
- Note the quantity of reading and writing done, both within and outside the sessions.
- Discuss how learners' attitudes have changed towards reading and writing.

Learners need you to point out these accomplishments. They will not jump out of the folders by themselves.

3.4 What about standardized test results?

Some programs require learners to take standardized tests. These results usually include the number of correct answers, a grade equivalency and percentile rankings of learners:

- Correct answers are the total number of correct test responses.
- Grade equivalencies tell learners approximately what grade level corresponds to their number of correct answers. These grades often look like this – 4.5. The 4 means grade four and the .5 means the fifth month. Together they mean that the test makers compare the test results with someone in Grade 4 in the 5th month of study.

- Percentile rankings compare the results of groups of people who took the test. They tell learners where they ranked when their test results were compared with others. For example, "in this group of people tested, these learners were in the top 10%."

  These results will not mean very much unless they are fully explained. Learners should be told about the limitations of standardized test results. Otherwise a mark, grade equivalency or percentile ranking can be very discouraging.

You should always question what positive effect any evaluation procedure will have. Learners should not feel inadequate or defeated by evaluations.

Name :
Date:

Record Sheet

Goal	How was this goal accomplished ?	Successes and difficulties	Date started	Date completed

Name : Jay
Date: March - May

Record Sheet

Goal	How was this goal accomplished ?	Successes and difficulties	Date started	Date completed
Improve Adding and Subtracting	Doing practise questions, word problems, etc.	He feels that he has improved in his adding and subtracting but still wants to practise more problems to improve borrowing and carrying skills.		Worked on throughout all the sessions
Work on reading comprehension	Written conversation, cloze, "talking through" various readings, writing summaries.	He feels that he still has difficulty with remembering stories that he reads, again he feels that he would like to continue practising.		
write a story	Selected a topic (Hobbies) Brainstormed for ideas and wrote a rough copy, read and re-read; made changes where necessary.	A big success. He wrote a story (one of his first pieces) and it was printed in the class booklet at Dal !		March 18
Learn to use the Library to find books.	By doing a Project	He selected a topic (Drug Alcohol Abuse) and we used the library to locate materials to complete project. Very successful !	May 1	

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Name : Mary
Date: Jan. - April

Record Sheet

Goal	How was this goal accomplished ?	Successes and difficulties	Date started	Date completed
incr. fluency in reading	read more keep dictionary of problem words	more fluent. Not so worried about making mistakes.	Jan - 1st week	end of Jan.
develop strategies to unlock unfam. words	try getting clue from rest of sentence. Try skip over it or sounding out.	found skipping over helpful	Feb 1	end of Feb
introd. to calculator	used newspaper flyers to shop for things	progress made here	Feb 12	ongoing
introd. to computer	typed letter and write-up for year book	a successful & pleasant experience	Feb 27	Feb 27
focus on different word endings	word lists ed, ing, tion, etc.	improvement (still has difficulty getting tongue around long, complicated words)	Mar 22	ongoing
measuring in metric (cent.)	tape measure & ruler	more comfortable at this & has had success meas. in centimeters	April	ongoing

Name : Fred
Date: May 1st

Record Sheet

Goal	How was this goal accomplished ?	Successes and difficulties	Date started	Date completed
To be able to write fluently -letters -applications for work -items on bills -to spell everyday words correctly To increase reading ability -to read other peoples writing better -to better be able to read handwriting script -to be able to read a special book and to read articles in Reader's Digest and especially National Geographic -to increase word knowledge and add to personal dictionary	-written conversations -write all you can in 5 minutes - graph progress -conversations followed by writing -learned to use the microfiche library catalogue -corrected spelling on some written conversations -personal spelling dictionary -added words each week and tested previous week's words -registered with library and got a card + book on Scuba Diving -write a story by filling in blanks -printed alphabet practice consistency of upper and lower case letters -conventions of writing such as use of caps and periods	The main need is to practice unmarred informal, draft writing, to overcome performance anxiety leading to thought blocking need to read more and continuously. add to personal dictionary to learn new words and spell everyday words - We've just begun, but the work is beginning to flow	22 Mar	1 May

Chapter 11

Facing Learning Blocks

Sometimes teaching sessions seem to go nowhere. Learning slows down and, in some cases, stops. In these situations, everyone gets discouraged. Adult students become frustrated and often feel like giving up. Tutors, instructors and teachers may assume that there is little they can do to change the situation or they may question their teaching ability.

While every learning situation is different, there are several things that tutors, instructors and teachers can do to help students understand what the learning block is and, in many cases, how they can deal with it.

1. What happens if progress is not being made?

Check the reading material

- Is it relevant? Is it of interest to the learner? Does the material deal with adult-oriented issues? Does it make readers want to read more?
- Is the material too difficult? Is there time for discussion so that the reader understands the vocabulary?
- Is the material well written? Are ideas well-organized into sections, chapters, etc? Do pictures and captions provide the reader with clues about the text?

Check the learning activities

- Do learners know why they are doing the activities? Are the activities applied to real situations and everyday experiences?
- Is there enough discussion before, during and after each learning activity?
- What are learners concentrating on while doing the activity? Are they trying to learn from the activity or are they doing it because you asked them to?
- Are skills integrated into the learning activities (i.e. upper and lower case letters, subject/verb agreement, etc.)?
- Are learners actively engaged in problem solving? Do you ask them to explain what they find difficult and why? Do you encourage learners to think of solutions? Do you ask them about past learning experiences?

Check tutor/instructor activities

- What do you do when learners get stuck? Do you correct them and give them the right answer? How long do you wait for learners to attempt an answer independently?
- Do you encourage dependence? Do learners think it's your role to provide all the answers?
- Do you always encourage perfection? Do you correct first draft writing attempts or do you let the learner self-correct?
- Are you actively learner watching? Do you pull back from instructing and watch how learners solve problems? Do you try to figure out learners' strengths and weaknesses?

Check the mini-lessons

- Are mini-lessons really mini? Are these short periods of time spent trying to deal with specific reading and writing problems or are they the major focus of the lesson?
- Are these lessons used as problem-solving sessions? Do learners actively try to figure out the problems and share in coming up with possible solutions?
- Are learning styles and preferences taken into account when planning the mini-lessons?
- Are personal dictionaries used to store information which is not easily memorized? Are these dictionaries used frequently while writing and reading?
- Are mini-lesson routines firmly established? Can learners predict how problems with reading, writing and math will be handled?

Check health

- Have hearing and eyesight been professionally checked?
- Is medication used regularly? Could this affect concentration or cause drowsiness?
- Are stress or emotional factors affecting concentration?

Learners may feel less frustrated if they can look for positive solutions and steps to take. The following *Learning Block Chart* may be helpful to keep track of what has been tried over a period of time and why.

Learning Block Chart

Name: Date:

Description of Learning Block	
Activities and Materials Used Materials	
Learning activities	
Tutor/Instructor activities	
Mini-lessons	
Health	
Comments and Solutions	

If the problems seem bigger than you are, check with a professional in your community. This might be:

- your program co-ordinator
- the Community Literacy Facilitator
- an experienced educator associated with the Continuing Education or Special Education Departments of the local school board
- an experienced counsellor
- the Learning Disabilities Section of the Department of Education.

2. Dealing with learning blocks

Tutors, instructors and teachers can work with learners to develop strategies for dealing with learning blocks. In addition to noting the activities and materials used in learning sessions, they can plan lessons, especially mini-lessons, that follow a structured learning sequence.

Structured learning encourages learners to participate actively in understanding problem areas and developing possible solutions. It requires the learner first to understand the task to be completed and then to analyze and plan, in a step-by-step fashion, how the task should be completed.

This means that each time learners are asked to complete a particular learning activity, they ask themselves a series of questions. These questions make learning something that is **done by** the learners rather than **done to** them. Here are some key questions that tutors, instructors and teachers should encourage learners to ask themselves.

The task

What am I being asked to do?

Have I done this before?

What outcome should I expect?

The plan

If the activity has been tried before:

How did I do it last time?
Did it work?
What steps did I follow?
What steps should I try this time?

If the activity is new:

What do I need to do to complete this activity? List steps.
Which should I do first? Second? etc. Order steps.
Is there any other way of completing this activity?
What will happen if I do it this way?
How do other people complete this activity?

The attempt

How is it working out?

If things are going well:

Record plan for future reference

If things are not working:

What else can I do?
What will happen if I do it this way?

The outcome

What worked? Why?

What didn't work? Why?

How does the outcome compare with what I expected?

What will I do next time?

Following this sequence takes time. Some adult students may not realize that people ask these 'internal questions' each time they complete a task. Illustrate the use of this sequence by discussing an everyday task that requires you to ask yourself questions. For example, baking a pie, fixing your car, building a closet all require you to analyze the task, develop a plan or series of steps, try to complete the task and discuss your results.

Help learners ask these questions each time they approach a new or difficult learning situation.

In addition, tutors, instructors and teachers should:

Explain the activity. Be specific about what you are asking the learner to do.

Outline the steps that need to be taken to complete the activity. Encourage the learner to ask questions.

Show how the activity can be completed. Take time to run through several trial runs.

Discuss the outcome.

When working on a particular learning block, you may want to work through the questions illustrating what could be done at each step.

At the end of every learning activity, provide learners with positive reinforcement. Encourage them to use this structured sequence every time they approach a learning activity which they find difficult.

Note:
Tutors, instructors and teachers should introduce only one concept or work on one specific learning block when using this sequence. Learners may find that working on a number of different learning blocks at one time only creates more confusion.

3. Common learning problems and suggested teaching strategies

Following a left to right sequence

- Use a text that is double spaced.
- Use a marker (poker chip, pencil, etc.) to indicate start of a line. Use a different coloured marker or object to indicate the end of a line.
- Draw an arrow under the line to indicate direction.

Staying on the line when reading

- Mark a coloured line on the edge of a clear plastic rule. Place the ruler under the line of print that the learner is reading.
- Use a text that is double spaced.
- Have the learner underline the line as it is read.

Moving from line to line

- Use a marker (poker chip, pencil, finger, etc.) to indicate the start of the line.
- Use a text that is double spaced.
- Have the learner underline the line as it is read.
- Select texts which have one or two sentences on each page.

Reading letters backwards

- Work with words and phrases, **not** individual letters. Trying to distinguish b, d, p and g by reading them in a line is very difficult. Use these letters in key words and phrases that the learner can remember. For example: *My girlfriend has a pet dog that lives in the basement*. Encourage the learner to store these key words and phrases in a personal dictionary.
- Attach a visual image to the problem letter(s), eg. **b**ell, **d**og. Store this image in the personal dictionary.

Reading words backwards

- Use a highlighter to highlight the first letter in each word. Tell the learner that these highlighted letters make the initial sound in the word.
- Encourage the learner to trace the word with finger and pencil.This will help the learner to notice where a word starts and where it ends.
- Work crossword and wordfind puzzles.

Skipping small words when reading

- Use a highlighter to mark words frequently missed.
  Note: Everyone skips words from time to time when they read. This teaching strategy should only be used for words that are frequently missed.
- Use cloze activities that leave out the small problem words.
- Have the learner reread the text paying attention to small words missed.
- Explain the function of smaller words such as a, an, and, the, this, these, etc.

Leaving off word endings

- Use a highlighter to mark word endings.
- Use cloze exercises that leave off word endings. Discuss which ending would fit and why.
- Develop cue cards which show how endings are added to words, eg. adding ing to verbs.

Distinguishing one sound from another

- Speak clearly when reading.
- Use choral and assisted reading activities.
- Use a tape recorder to record the learner reading. Play the tape back and discuss the sounds the learner has difficulty pronouncing correctly.
- Work on specific word families and word patterns that illustrate problem sounds.
- Develop a list of key words or phrases that illustrate particular sounds. Try to use words that the learner uses in speech or encounters regularly. Store these words in the learner's personal dictionary.
- Develop mini-lessons using the phonetic generalizations outlined in the *Mini-Lesson* activities.

Using visual clues

- Encourage the learner to look at the visual image on the page to predict what the text may be about.
- Have the learner write photo stories. Use pictures from a magazine or newspaper and have the learner write a text based on these pictures.

Reading without understanding

- Explain that reading is an active process, not a passive one. Readers need to ask themselves questions as they read in order to understand what they read.
- Encourage the learner to paraphrase the text in his/her own words. This can be done verbally or in writing.
- Encourage the learner to visualize the story as s/he reads. Ask the learner what images s/he sees as s/he reads.
- Provide the learner with an overview of what the text is about. Discuss key terms which are used in the text.

- Encourage the learner to note important information as s/he reads by taking notes, underlining sentences, highlighting passages.
- Use material that is relevant to the learner's needs and wants.

Reading between the lines

- Use newspaper cartoons to illustrate reading between the lines. Political cartoons and those which comment on daily life often require the reader to read between the lines.
- Use poetry to show how the reader must draw inferences from the text in order to understand what the poet is saying.
- Use brainstorming to analyze text organization.
- Use written conversation to direct ideas and questions.
- Use humour (jokes, tapes of T.V. sitcoms, photos, etc.) to illustrate how people must often read between the lines in order to find the humour in a situation. Take time to discuss these jokes and humorous situations.

Reading a whole text

- Explain that a text can be read over a period of time. Show how the text is divided into various parts – sentences, paragraphs, pages, chapters. These parts do not have to be read all at once.
- Use a newspaper to show that you only need to read those parts that interest you or the parts that you need to look up. You do not need to read the whole paper.
- Use texts which do not overwhelm the learner.

Starting to write

- Use written conversation to provide support and to model the development of ideas.
- Use brainstorming to encourage the learner to develop and organize ideas.
- Use newspaper and magazine photos to start stories. Ask questions like, "What is happening in this photo? Who is involved? Why are they doing that? What do you think they're talking about? What will happen next?"
- Use language experience to assist the learner to develop ideas.
- Write the beginning of a story and have the learner complete it.

Organizing writing

- Use brainstorming to compose and organize ideas.
- Use written conversation to develop sequence of ideas.
- Use the 'Hamburger method' of organizing ideas. A hamburger is made up of several different parts just as a text contains different sections and ideas. The top bun is similar to the opening comments in a text. These comments may be flavoured with sesame seeds (supporting comments) to enhance their flavour. Underneath the bun you find the patties or main topic of your text. This topic may have cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, hot peppers, etc. added to illustrate other sub-topics and ideas. The bottom bun completes the hamburger in much the same way that closing comments complete the text.

Applying rules learned

- Develop learning activities and mini-lessons that apply a particular spelling, grammar, or phonetic rule to an everyday situation. Many times a learner understands and completes the activities in a workbook, but has difficulty applying this information to his/her daily life. Always teach a skill according to its use and function in the learner's life.

Following directions

- Use structured learning to assist the learner in understanding the task and steps needed to complete the task.
- Use everyday reading material that requires the learner to follow directions (recipes, medicine bottles, bus schedules, T.V. guides, how-to manuals, assembly instructions for Christmas gifts).

Seeing small print

- Use a photocopier to enlarge the page.
- Use a magnifier to enlarge the print.
- Rewrite the text using a black marker or use a typewriter with large print. Leave lots of white space on the page. Use upper and lower case letters.

4. Case Studies

The following case studies outline three different learning problems. In each case, the tutor/instructor/teacher involves the learner in solving the problem.

Case Study 1: Ann

Even though Ann worked hard and attended each tutoring session, her reading and writing skills did not improve. She and her tutor were becoming increasingly frustrated. Here are some of the things they did to bring her reading and writing skills along.

October:

First, they put away the reading series they were using. They visited the local library and together picked out different kinds of books of interest – some were short books written by other adult learners, some were children's books with which she was familiar. They also gathered reading materials that Ann used at home and those that she found in the local community.

November:

They discussed how the tutor tended to jump in when Ann had difficulty with a word without giving her time to figure the word out on her own. Together, they developed a new set of strategies.

- First, the learner was given time to work the word out for herself. She would read ahead and then re-read the text to try to figure out what the unknown word might be. The tutor encouraged her not to get hung up on each individual word.
- If this did not work, the tutor would provide her with various clues: "The word rhymes with.... The first letter is .... This part of the word is...." Sometimes the tutor would tell her to skip the word and read ahead. Later they would come back to the word.
- Finally, if Ann could not figure out the word, the tutor would tell her what it was and then discuss ways of trying to remember it. Ann would often store the word in her personal dictionary.
- When the problem word caused her difficulties again, the tutor would help by giving various clues and by encouraging her to look the word up in her personal dictionary.

January:

Ann still had trouble developing a fluent pace when reading. Even with a text in which she knew most of the words, she tended to read each word separately. As a result, she often had difficulty retelling details from the text. The tutor decided to spend more time on choral reading so that Ann could develop a fluent pace. They decided that repeated readings of some favorite pieces would help her to get the rhythm of fluent reading.The tutor also read some of these pieces into a tape recorder so that Ann could listen and read along at home between sessions.

February:

Ann and her tutor agreed that they tended to get the most out of the first part of each session. They decided to shorten the sessions: instead of working for two-hour stretches with a short break in between, they decided to work for an intense one-hour period. In between sessions, homework was done.

* Reading with the tape recorder was not working. The tape went too fast and keeping up often resulted in frustration. Instead, they decided Ann should keep a journal about what she had read or done that day. Each day Ann would spend five minutes writing in the journal. Recalling a previous teacher's comment, she decided to write in script because it would look more 'mature'.

March:

The journal writing assignments seemed to work. Ann felt more confident – not only in her ability to write, but also to understand what she read. They started to do more writing during each session. They realized, however, that although Ann had practiced and practiced script writing, she actually had a hard time reading script letters. They decided to use only printed letters again. Ann immediately found this easier to read.

April:

Ann still had some difficulty reading, but both she and her tutor felt that they were making progress. They could now work together to solve problems.

Case Study 2: Donnie

It is the beginning of February. I started tutoring Donnie in mid-October. He is a 54-year old man who will soon be retiring from a plant where he has worked for most of his life. Donnie was told in the fourth grade that he would never learn to read. His teacher felt that he would be better off working. So, that is what Donnie did. He left school and went to work as a very young boy.

Now, some forty years later, Donnie is learning to read for the first time in his life. It was not something he counted on having to do, but changes at his workplace demanded it. This is when I entered the picture. Four months ago, Donnie and I arranged to meet twice a week for two hours each session.

At first, the going was rough. Donnie was unable to read anything at all. He did not fully know the alphabet and those letters he did know, he often confused. **N** was **U**, **M** was **W**, **B** was **D**, **Y** was **G** and so on. I found all instructional materials, including those supposedly written at a very basic level, much too difficult for him. We could not begin to tackle work vocabulary associated with his job change because Donnie could not identify even the simplest of words.

I tried recording some of Donnie's personal experiences that he dictated to me for reading material. I hoped developing materials which drew from his work and personal life would make it easier for him to approach reading. Although the idea was right, we ran into the same hurdle. Donnie's verbal vocabulary was too sophisticated for reading. I tried model reading, choral reading and assisted reading with the language experience stories. Despite the method and number of readings, Donnie could never go back and read any part of the text himself even though he was its author.

In the weeks to come, I realized that Donnie did not understand many things about language that I took for granted. He could read the alphabet, but did not associate the sound he made with the sound of the letter when it was part of a word. He did not know that the first letter(s) of the word gave it its initial sound, or that the last letter(s) gave it its final sound. He did not know that text was read linearly from left to right. He did not know that the space between words meant the end of one word and the start of another. And there are other examples. Inexperienced with students such as Donnie, it took me weeks to discover this. It took me much longer to find effective teaching strategies which would help Donnie understand language and, above all, learn to read.

I started with the elements of language that I had taken for granted – letter-sound relationships and text orientation. I explained them and developed learning activities which reinforced their understanding. I encouraged Donnie to write and to copy. He thought looking at the spelling of words was cheating. I wanted him to see that, at this stage, it was a wonderful way to learn.

The first minor breakthrough came when I used written conversation. Usually we started every session with a reading. I decided to follow this reading with written conversation as a way to ensure comprehension, to familiarize Donnie with text lay out and production, and to encourage writing. This exercise provided Donnie with a model for writing. He could attempt to respond to questions I asked about the reading by repeating the words and structures I used. He also began to take risks. Trying to write unfamiliar words according to their sounds, Donnie was beginning to understand how sound governed word spelling.

Donnie continued to make small accomplishments. Yet, I noticed that he never seemed able to retain and recall words he learned in previous sessions or within the day's sessions. He did very little independent work, particularly reading. The fear he could not learn began to lurk in the back of my mind. I wondered if Donnie had some type of learning disability and, if so, how to diagnose it and what to do about it.

I decided to structure our sessions more. I focused on a few words each time and built in a lot of repetition. I continued to encourage Donnie to read at home with his wife's assistance and even prepared some taped readings for him to follow, but I used these books in class for more than reading. They became my textbooks. I rewrote or summarized the stories in a way that highlighted a certain word or sentence structure and developed learning activities based on these texts. I learned to introduce concepts one step at a time and always as they related to the reading. After extensive word studies and recognition activities, I suggested that Donnie rewrite the text, substituting his own personal experience.

This worked. Donnie began to read. Not a lot. Not even complete sentences. But he began to recognize words in a text on his own for the first time since we started working together. Having experienced so much frustration over the past months, I am so excited when Donnie picks up a few new words each session and **retains** them. Learning will continue to be slow. This is only the beginning. But now I know that Donnie can learn to read.

Donnie Sample

Step 1:

The tutor took a story and rewrote it in a simpler form. She and Donnie then read the story together.

Read the story.

Hi. I am Olive.
I am from Jamaica.
I am a young woman.
I like Canada.
I am an immigrant.
I am learning to read.
One day, I want to be a nurse's aide.

Step 2:

After reading the story, Donnie answered these questions

Read the questions. Complete the answer.

Who is Olive?
Olive is _____ .
Where is Olive from?
Olive is from _____ .
Where is Olive now?
Olive is in _____ .
What is Olive doing?
Olive is _____ .
What is Olive's goal?
Olive wants to become a _____ .

Step 3:

Donnie still had trouble reading the word 'am'. This mini-lesson used the previous story to help Donnie identify and use the word.

Read the story again. Put "am" in the blanks.

Hi. I ___ Olive.
I ___ from Jamaica.
I ___ a young woman.
I like Canada.
I ___ an immigrant.
I ___ learning to read.
One day, I want to be a nurse's aide.

Case Study 3: Lea

April 21/89

After a slow beginning at the first of the year, Lea is going now at a pace hard to keep up with. In Sept./Oct. we seemed to be on a plateau, and we weren't moving ahead at all with exercises in grammar, reading or math. So for about 2 weeks we dropped all pretence of working to get further along in education and started reading for fun. The break was just what we needed. During this time we looked at science books and found out about other planets, moons and the sun. We looked at maps of the world and of Canada and discovered how small Nova Scotia really is. We looked at magazines just for the pictures and read a book together just for the pleasure of reading. There were no grammar exercises, no set pattern to our work and no expectations on my part to have certain work done at home. It was just fun exploring books.

What a difference this break made when Lea discovered how much fun there is to be found in reading. It gave her a great incentive to learn as many written words as she can. Now, each day she brings in words

that she has found (by reading books she has chosen, checked out of the library and taken home). She wants to know what the words are, how they can be used in sentences and how to spell them. These are words she skipped over at the first of the year. Words she would not even look at such as "advantage", "complaining" and the word that started this all "opportunity".

What a joy it is to be working with a student so hungry to learn - new words, new ideas, new everything. But also, what a challenge. I have to keep searching for new and better ways to use this sudden urge for knowledge.

I have learned a valuable lesson this year: we will come to plateaus again - STOP the methods you are using. LOOK for fun ways to use books, magazines, tapes or whatever media is available. LISTEN to your student. She'll let you know when it's time to get back to the business of learning. Then HOPE you are able to keep up with the pace she sets.

Chapter 12

Working With Groups

While adult literacy and basic education tutoring sessions are often held one to one, there are, increasingly, programs which offer a considerable amount of small group instruction. This chapter is aimed at those tutors, instructors and teachers who work with groups in adult literacy and basic education programs.

1. What does working in a group mean?

Working in a group does not simply mean being in a room together. It means that people are actually doing something together.

In group learning, people are actively involved in setting their own goals, planning lessons, selecting learning materials and evaluating progress. In group learning, people are constantly discussing what they are doing and why they are doing it. The instructor's role is one of facilitator – helping people to set goals, helping to plan the session, and helping each member of the group to measure progress.

This is different from classroom instruction which may rely on a pre-designed curriculum, lecture style instruction, standardized testing and learning goals established by the instructor, curriculum, or sponsoring organization. This is not to say that group learning does not or cannot occur in classroom settings. It is to say that group learning is different from classroom learning.

As a result, instructors, tutors and sponsoring organizations who want group learning to occur must focus on how learning in groups takes place, as well as on what is taught.

2. What factors should be considered when working with a group?

There are a number of factors which tutors, instructors and teachers should consider when working with a group.

- Group instruction offers a wide range of tutor/instructor – student ratios. An instructor may have a group of 25 students, but still may organize the work so that learners work in groups of two to five.
- Groups are usually made up of people with a wide range of needs and abilities. The instructor has to plan each session and select resource materials carefully so that the requirements of all individuals in the group are satisfied.
- Group instruction must reconcile the needs of the individuals in the group to the needs of the group as a whole. People in the group need to know that their feelings and concerns are considered in the teaching methods and learning activities. They need to feel confident about their abilities to learn.
- Group instruction should consider the differences in age, sex, culture, background, attitude and lifestyle that exist in a group.
- Group instruction should encourage people to contribute to and participate in their own learning and the learning of others. Many adult learners are more aware of what they cannot do than what they can do. A supportive atmosphere that encourages people to contribute to their own learning and the learning of others plays an important and powerful role in developing self-confidence and a positive attitude towards learning.

Finally, tutors, instructors and teachers need to consider what role they play in the group. Some questions they should ask themselves are:

- Am I the one in the group who is always the expert on everything or do I encourage others in the group to respond to questions? Do I validate these responses?
- Do I dominate discussion and activity or do I promote discussion and activity?
- Do I introduce topics for discussion that are relevant to the group?
- Do I encourage students in the group to help each other?
- Do I always ask questions when I know the answers? Do people in the group know I do this?
- Do I treat everyone in the group equally? Do I behave differently when talking to certain people in the group?
- Do people in the group help plan and evaluate the sessions?

3. Getting started

People who join a group for the first time are always a little nervous. The first half hour on the first night or day is usually when people are really nervous!

Everyone is conscious of everyone else. Everyone wants to make a good impression. Some people in the group may talk freely during this first meeting – others may not say anything. For many tutors, instructors and teachers, the most difficult hurdle is getting started.

3.1 Setting up the room

Literacy and upgrading programs often take place in rooms designed for others. Instructors may need to re-design the room to meet their needs. Remember that people are going to be sitting in the room for several hours each session. A dull room does little to enhance an exciting lesson and even less to foster group spirit. You don't need elaborate furnishings, just comfortable ones.

Here are some things instructors should consider in setting up the room.

Seating arrangements

Group work requires that people be able to see and speak to each other. Many traditional classrooms have seats arranged in rows. Talking to someone's back does little to foster group spirit. If possible, arrange seats so that people are sitting in a semi-circle or horseshoe shape. This allows all members of the group to see each other.

Furnishings

Make sure that chairs are adult size and that tables are available.

Size, lighting and ventilation

Make sure you have enough space for everyone and that there is adequate ventilation. A small, stuffy room only makes people sleepy. The room should also be well lit with few shadows and dark corners.

Teaching aids

Teaching aids can assist in the sharing of information. Flipcharts and chalkboards are useful for outlining what is to be done, brainstorming, showing steps in a problem, etc. Overhead projectors allow instructors to prepare information in advance. Audio/visual equipment permits the instructor to introduce outside sources of information and to change the pace of a session.

Not every program will be able to afford these aids, but programs may be able to borrow from other groups and organizations in the area.

3.2 Opening the first meeting

The most natural opening for tutors, instructors and teachers is to start by introducing themselves and telling everyone about the course. People should then be encouraged to ask questions about the course and the program.

As simple as this sounds, many instructors start the first evening with a very brief introduction, if any at all, and then launch into a detailed lesson. Later, they may discover that people are still uncertain about what is expected of them.

There are a number of things the instructor can do that will help the group through first meeting jitters.

Before the first meeting, consider if members of the group:

- know each other
- are from the same community
- know anything about the program
- have attended a literacy and upgrading program before
- have worked in a group before

On the first night, be sure to:

- introduce yourself
- explain the goals and parameters of the program
- outline the length of the program
- explain what is expected
- encourage people to ask questions

Instructors should also make sure that people know how to get to the program.

3.3 Introductions

After you have introduced yourself, outlined the program and allowed time for questions, have people in the group introduce themselves. Here are several ways to facilitate introductions.

Simple introductions

Have each person introduce themselves, telling some information about where they live, etc.

Walk around introductions

Give people five or ten minutes to walk around the room introducing themselves to the others in the group. Later, have people try to remember the names of people in the group.

Partner introductions

Have people divide into pairs. Tell the group you would like them to interview their partner and later, when they come back to the group, they will introduce their partner to the group.

Round table introductions

If seated in a circle or semi-circle, have people introduce the person on their left to the person on their right. "Jim, I'd like you to meet Mary." This way people get to know the names of the people seated next to them.

Group Bingo

On the following page there is a group bingo sheet which allows people to get to know each other. It also helps break the ice on the first evening.

- Give each person in the group a copy of the bingo sheet (you may wish to adapt the one provided).
- Each person then asks another member in the group one question on the sheet. Each time someone answers yes to a question, that person signs his/her name in the square.
- The first person to complete a bingo line horizontally, vertically or diagonally shouts "Bingo". You may also want to play full card bingo where all the squares are filled in.

BINGO

	B	I	N	G	O
1	likes their coffee black	has a "green" thumb	sleeps in a waterbed	has a sweet tooth	was not born in Nova Scotia
2	once worked as a waiter or waitress	grew up in a family of five or more	favorite colour is purple	likes to walk barefoot	chews sugarless gum
3	can see the ocean from their home	has three children	hates to do dishes	would prefer to live in the city	can walk to work
4	has two pets	likes liver	has a black dog	is the oldest in the family	works shift work
5	is wearing something green	enjoys playing bingo	has relatives living outside Nova Scotia	plays cards or baseball	has two cars in the family

3.4 Getting to know the group

You have outlined the program, answered questions and have had people introduce themselves. You now want to get started. Before jumping into the lesson however, you may want to get to know the group a little better. You may want to know a little more about what people expect from the program, what things they are interested in doing, what goals they have, etc. Knowing more about people in the group will help you in planning future sessions. It also sends a signal to the group that you want them to be involved in the planning and decision making process.

Here are several suggestions for getting to know the people in the group.

Sentence starters

Have participants complete sentence starters that get them to talk about why they are taking the program and what they want from it. Some sentence starters to help get this information include :

"I'm taking this course because _____."

"After this program, I hope _____."

"Right now, I feel _____."

Sentence starters to help you understand previous school or upgrading experiences might be:

"The worst (best) course I've ever taken _____."

"The worst (best) teacher I've ever had _____."

These can be completed as a group with the instructor recording the responses on the flipchart or chalkboard, or they can be completed in pairs, small groups or individually using the students' journals (see *Journal* in Activities Section).

Self-assessment

Have people identify what they bring to the group and how comfortable they are with working in the group. A good starting point is to have each member ask themselves the following questions and then discuss their answers with others in the group.

- What do I bring to the group? Consider personal qualities, experiences, strengths, etc.

- What do I hope to get out of the group? Consider personal goals and objectives.
- How comfortable am I working in the group?
- How can I help the group meet its goals?

Group assessment

Have people identify the collective strengths and abilities that exist within the group.

- Record the information collected in the self-assessment on the flip chart or chalkboard. Combine this information in a list to show participants the abilities that exist within the group. This will help you develop a group profile.
- Have each person list three words that describe the individual they interviewed during the introduction. Record this information on the flipchart or chalkboard to show participants the characteristics that make up the group.

Community assessment

Have participants identify the strengths and weaknessess that exist within their community. You may want to get participants to brainstorm:

- Community boundaries. These may be geographic, cultural, linguistic, economic, etc.
- Community population – number, urban/rural
- Economic situation in the community. What employment exists within the community? What do most people do?
- Community services. Recreational, medical, etc.
- Community issues and concerns

Use the information gathered to develop a community profile.

Use all this information to help determine individual wants and needs and group goals and to plan future sessions.

4. Developing relevant activities

You now have enough information to start working. You will need to think of activities which will be of interest to the group and which will help to develop individual skills. Ask the folowing questions:

- What are people interested in?
- What do they talk about during class and at breaks?
- What experiences do they have which seem to be similar?
- What specific skill areas do they want and need to work on? Are any of these areas similar?

Tutors should use the information outlined in the initial interviews (Chapter 4) and the answers to the above questions as starting points for the group.

This means that they should:

- identify issues for group discussion
- look for materials that relate to these issues
- encourage students to develop projects based on these issues (see *Projects* in the Activities Section)
- develop activities and select support material that relate to these issues and which allow each student to develop his or her reading, writing and math skills.

Activities such as cloze, written conversation, brainstorming, book reviews, interviews, surveys, publishing, etc. can all be used with groups to help develop reading, writing and math skills. Everyday materials, such as those listed in the level descriptions in Chapter 5, can be combined with more formal materials such as exercise books to assist learners in the group with reading, writing and math.

5. What are some problems which may arise?

Group learning can take place in a number of different settings from community based to community college. In each setting there are problems which may arise with group instruction.

Working with different levels in the same group

This is a concern which prevents many tutors, instructors and teachers from organizing group learning. However, it is also a factor which can make group learning more effective.

Individuals who have mastered certain skills can be encouraged to work with others in the group who are having problems in that skill area. Peer tutoring builds confidence and allows people to share their knowledge. It also allows the instructor to focus on problems other members of the group may have.

Selecting resource materials

It may be difficult to find resource materials which are relevant to the wants and needs of the group. It may also be difficult to find the range of materials that is necessary for the different levels of the group.

Encourage students to gather resource materials from their home, community, friends, workplace, etc. Some of the best materials for group work come from the students themselves. The Literacy Resource Centres and public libraries also contain many useful materials.

Preparing for a standardized test

In many programs, participants are required to take a standardized test. These tests vary in length and level of difficulty. For many students, tests mean failure. Test anxiety may prevent them from making progress during the program.

Before starting the program, tutors, instructors and teachers should inquire about the types of tests which students may have to take. Find out when these tests must be taken. Ask if you can examine an earlier test and if students can have a copy. Inquire about re-testing procedures.

During the program, take time to talk about tests. Ask students if they have ever taken a test. Discuss feelings and attitudes they have towards testing. Outline test taking strategies. You may also want to have several practice testing sessions during the program.

Dealing with people who dominate discussion

Some people may dominate discussion in a group to such a degree that others cannot actively participate. To encourage more equitable participation:

- Have people split into groups or pairs for discussion and then ask each pair or small group to report back to the entire group. Place a time limit on the reports. This will allow others to participate.
- Provide each individual with five dots. Each time they comment on a topic, they must give up one dot.
- Talk with people to find out why they need to dominate discussion. Explain that you would like others to participate more fully in group discussions.

Dealing with personal problems

Much time can be spent dealing with home or personal problems in class. Tutors, instructors and teachers may start to feel that they are neglecting their teaching and that nothing is being accomplished.

If this is the case, tutors, instructors and teachers need to explain that they are not able to offer advice on all problems. They should encourage their students to look to other sources of help that may exist in the community. Provide students with a list of support agencies and their phone numbers and suggest that they should contact these agencies directly for advice. However, the tutor may offer to contact the agency or perhaps suggest that two students role play contacting the agency.

Dealing with new students

Many literacy and upgrading programs that use group instruction have new students entering as others are leaving. There are a number of ways to introduce a new person to the group.

- Let the student sit in on one of the large group discussions. At break, introduce the student to others in the group.
- Introduce the student to one of the small groups during a small group discussion.
- Introduce the student to several members of the group at the end of class.

If possible, take time before or after the student's first session to explain the program and to discuss his/her needs and wants. Let the person get a feel for the program and the people in the group. Most new students prefer to keep a low profile during the first few sessions and should not be forced to join in immediately.

Encouraging all members of the group to participate

Some people may not want to take part in group activities – or even be in the program.

Talk with them to find out why they feel uncomfortable in the group. Some people may want a tutor and, if possible, a tutor should be provided. Many times people are ready to participate in the group after they have worked one-to-one for awhile.

Some people may be in a program because they were told to take part. While this is not the best situation, try to talk with them about the program and how it is structured around people's wants and needs. Explain that they will have an opportunity to participate in decision making and planning. If people continue to feel uncomfortable, talk with the referral agency to see if there are other possibilities for upgrading. Ultimately, people should not be forced to participate in something they do not want to be in.

Evaluating group progress using formal and informal assessment techniques

Evaluation is about judging how effective the program is or has been in meeting the goals of the group and the individual wants and needs of the participants. Evaluation should not be an end of the program event, but a process that takes place daily.

For many tutors, instructors and teachers, this definition of evaluation is difficult to carry out because many of the evaluation tools selected by the sponsoring organization are designed to be used at the end of the program. Furthermore, many of the formal evaluation tools do not reflect the goals of the participants and thus do not measure if these goals have been met.

Both formal and informal evaluation techniques do measure progress. The difference is that formal techniques define progress according to criteria set by people from outside the group. Informal techniques define progress according to criteria set by the group and individuals in the group.

Both are valid measures. Too often, however, informal evaluation techniques are not recognized as valid measurements of progress. Tutors, instructors and teachers should encourage the use and recognition of informal evaluation techniques. One instructor used the following questionnaire as an informal evaluation tool.

Mid-Course Evaluation

Please respond to the following questions as openly as possible.

1. What have I learned about myself so far?

2. What have I learned about working with others so far?

3. How useful are these sessions for me at work? At home? Give examples.

4. What would I like to learn more about?

5. If I were given time to present something to the group, what would I plan?

6. If I were in my tutor/instructor's place, what would I do differently?

7. What frustrations, if any, have I experienced with the course?

8. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being "extremely" and 5 being "not much"), how have I enjoyed the course so far?

Activities

The following section contains activities useful for people reading, writing and doing math at the A, B, C and D levels. Each activity begins with a general description of how to do the activity. This is followed by a series of questions and answers which help to clarify:

- who will benefit from the activity
- what strategies and skills are being developed
- how to handle problems which may arise
- how to use the activity with groups and in one-to-one settings
- how this activity can be used for people working at each of the A, B, C and D levels

Finally, there are samples from learners, tutors, instructors and teachers who have used the activity.

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Mini-lessons 263
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Assisted Reading

Assisted Reading

This technique helps hesitant readers develop fluent reading strategies. Tutors/instructors/teachers and learners take turns reading parts of the text.

1. Select a text that the learner wants to read.
2. Examine the text. Look at the title, illustrations, photos, headings, chapter titles, captions, first sentences in paragraphs and discuss what the story may be about.
3. Record the discussion on a sheet of paper, flipchart or chalkboard. Encourage learners to ask questions about illustrations, headings, etc.
4. Take turns reading parts of the text. For learners who find reading aloud difficult, have them read the passage silently before they read it aloud.
5. Stop occasionally to discuss what the text is about. Confirm any predictions made earlier when learners examined the illustrations, photos and headings. Also predict what might happen next in the text.
6. Continue to take turns reading. You do not have to finish reading the entire text.
7. Provide support as learners read. If they run into problems, ask:
   "Does it make sense?" (draw on readers' semantic knowledge)
   "Does it sound right?" (draw on readers' syntactic knowledge)

   Do:
   - Suggest that they read ahead and then reread difficult parts of the text.
   - Encourage them to make an educated guess about the word based on its position in the sentence, its sound and its appearance.
   - Discuss the content of the piece (the main ideas, details) before, during and after reading.

   Do not:
   - Interrupt frequently and talk while they read.
   - Comment on every word. "Uhhuh. Yes. That's right." This can turn readers into head swivlers who expect some response for every word they try.
   - Always read the difficult words or passages for readers. Assist them to think of and to use a variety of reading strategies to figure out the difficult word or phrase. Ask "What can you do if you are stuck? What worked last time? What were you going to try to do this time?"
8. Discuss the effectiveness of reading strategies used at the end of the reading. Take time to record these discussions using the *Reading Strategies Used* chart in Chapter 6.

9. Discuss the predictions that learners made before they started to read. Encourage them to use illustrations, photos, titles, chapter headings, key words, etc. each time they read to help them predict what the story will be about.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

People who have difficulty reading will find this process helpful. They may not realize how many ways there are to figure out difficult parts of a text. With individual attention, fluent reading strategies can be developed and effective results achieved. It is heartening for learners to know that they have options to try and that they can keep records to show progress.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

All fluent reading strategies are reinforced, especially those which focus on developing prediction skills. Frequent discussions help learners to focus on reading for meaning.

Risk taking is required when reading new and difficult materials.

Knowledge of letter sound relationships is being developed.

What are some of the problems which may arise?

Too much assistance from the tutor fosters dependence. Learners may want you to help them at every falter. Independent fluent reading is still the desired goal, so encourage the independent use of fluent reading strategies for most reading situations and be aware of when and why you assisted.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Use assisted reading to assess the reading strengths and weaknesses of learners. It is also useful for charting progress. Although it may seem time consuming, it is very effective.

Have learners work with other learners. Peer tutoring is helpful in building confidence.

Write out the new reading strategies on file cards. Encourage learners to keep the cards handy when reading independently and to try and follow the strategies listed on the cards.

Tips for Level A and B

Focus attention on the meaning of the text, on making predictions, and on trying some of the fluent reading strategies. These readers tend to read each word and are often not willing to take a risk and skip unknown words, read ahead or make meaningful substitutions.

Read material that is interesting. Take time to choose something of real interest. The regional Literacy Resource Centres have a good selection of material written by adult learners from Canada and Great Britain. They also have factual and fictional books at A, B, C and D levels about a variety of topics.

Rewrite and simplify everyday materials (magazine articles, newspapers, etc.) if no material is available at a suitable reading level on a suitable topic. You may also ask other adult learners to write these short summaries. This will be of benefit to everyone.

Tips for Level C and D

Encourage readers to slow down when they read and notice what they are reading – word endings, prefixes, etc. Readers at this level often use strategies such as substitution and prediction. What they have difficulty doing is confirming their substitutions and predictions accurately. Activities such as Cloze can be useful for readers who need to slow down when they read.

Have group discussions about the reading strategies people use.

Brainstorm

Brainstorm

Brainstorming (clustering or mapping) is a great way to start and organize writing. It is an effective way to record discussion. In general, it is one of the most versatile activities to help learners organize their thoughts for writing, or to analyze and compare ideas.

1. Ask learners to choose a topic of interest. Discuss what you and the learners know about the topic. Write the topic in the centre or at the top of the page. If you are working with an A or B level writer, you may wish to do most of the writing during the brainstorm. C and D writers will likely be able to do the writing themselves once they are familiar with the activity.
2. As you discuss the topic, write down all ideas raised around the topic word (see the samples that follow this description). Some people find it useful to circle the topic word so that, as the ideas are written around the topic, they start to look like the spokes of a wheel.
3. Talk as writing takes place so that learners can hear what kinds of things people think about when writing and what kinds of decisions they make. This will help them to understand the writing process.
4. Place ideas that are similar next to each other. This is called clustering. Learners may do this as they brainstorm or after the brainstorm is complete. Some people circle their clusters when they have finished.
5. When the brainstorm is complete, give each cluster a heading. Learners can then use the brainstorm and cluster headings to help organize and sequence a future writing project.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

All learners will benefit from doing brainstorms. A brainstorm activity will boost learners' self-confidence by showing that they:

- have more ideas than they realize
- know a lot about a topic they are interested in
- can look for and find connections between ideas.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Categorizing and organizing. Learners develop skills to express and organize their thoughts about a topic of interest. They learn to cluster related ideas into categories. These categories can then be used to organize a piece of writing. Figuring out where ideas connect can lead to lively and productive debates, especially in groups.

Reading. Learners need to reread the brainstorm to find out if ideas put forward belong with existing ideas. This builds in purposeful repetition.

Writing. Let learners write as much of the brainstorm as possible. Writing about one topic repeats vocabulary which is helpful for beginning writers.

Risk-taking and flexible thinking. These result from comparing brainstorms different people write about the same topic. There can be many ways of looking at and organizing the same ideas, which may come as a surprise to some learners.

How to handle problems which may arise

Some learners may have difficulty organizing ideas and recognizing the connections which can be made. They may also have a difficult time coming up with the names for categories or clusters. There is no easy or magical way to develop this skill, but practice helps. Try short but interesting brainstorms about known topics and do them on a regular basis as needed. Also, provide some names/categories for the clusters and describe why these names/categories would be appropriate.

Perfect spelling or penmanship is not necessary here, but make sure that the ideas are recorded so they can be reread. The brainstorm often forms the basis for a future writing project. It would be frustrating to lose good ideas.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Add to brainstorms over a number of sessions. You can use different coloured pencils, pens or markers to contrast what has been added on different days.

Small groups can brainstorm about the same topic and then compare the results. This can show learners that there are many different thoughts and opinions about the same topic.

Begin a project with a brainstorm. Brainstorm again at the end of the project and compare the two. This can provide an effective way to recognize what has been learned.

Brainstorms are wonderful tools to record group discussions. Use a chalkboard or flip chart to map out the main ideas and details of these discussions. Have small groups brainstorm to record their ideas and to compare the results. These discussions might also be the result of watching a movie or video, completing a reading activity, or going on a trip.

Tips for Level A and B

Create brainstorms about topics familiar to beginning readers and writers. Build self-confidence by showing learners the information they know about a topic.

Encourage learners to reread the brainstorm as much as possible, even if it seems time consuming and a struggle. Rereading the brainstorm is useful to avoid repeating ideas and to ensure clarity.

Tips for Level C and D

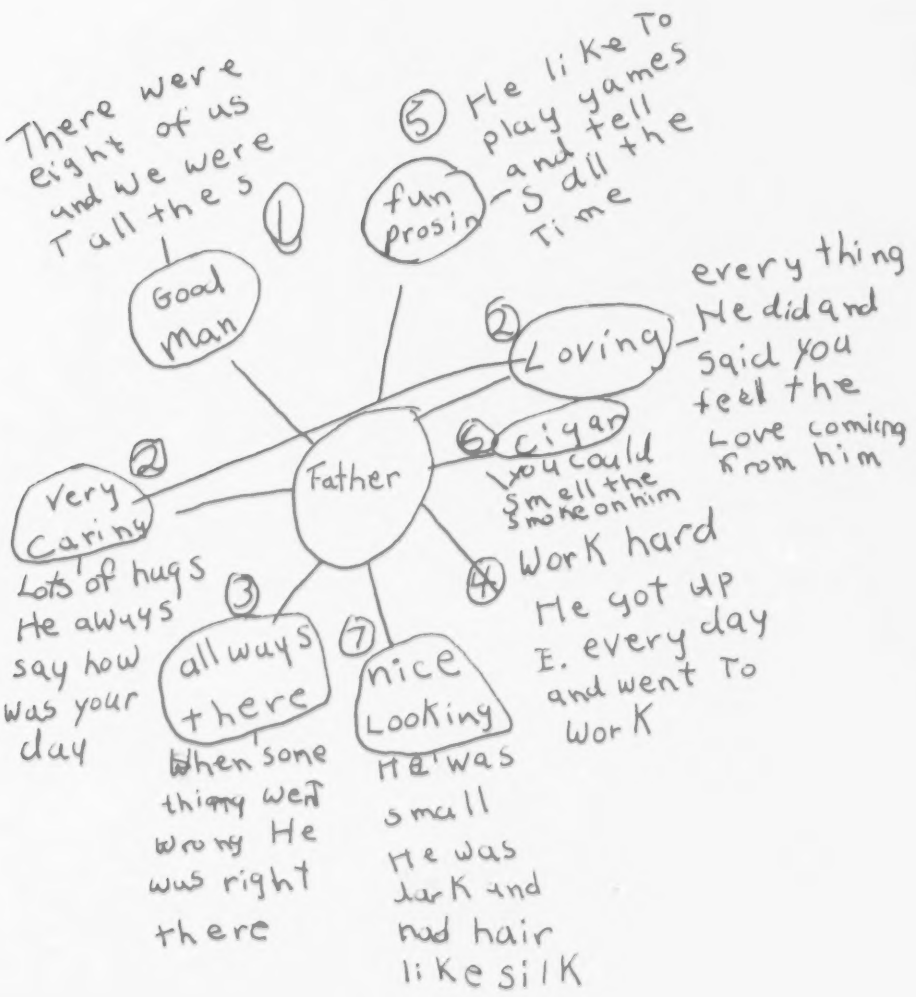
Use brainstorms to introduce new types of written material. Read reviews, synopses or encyclopedia entries, or look at maps or charts, etc. and then brainstorm the information presented. This will help the learner to understand how the information is organized.

Ask learners to organize a completed brainstorm in a different way. This is difficult to do, but reinforces that there are different ways of organizing ideas.

Brainstorm Sample #1 and #2:
Father Brainstorm and Paragraph

This learner wanted to write a story about her ailing father. She discussed her recollections and feelings. while the tutor helped her to place these recollections around the circle. The tutor also helped her to consider what information could be grouped/categorized together.

Once completed, the learner considered what order she wanted to write these ideas. She discussed her choices with her tutor and numbered the categories. Notice how she decided that two paragraphs were so similar that they should be written together as the second category.

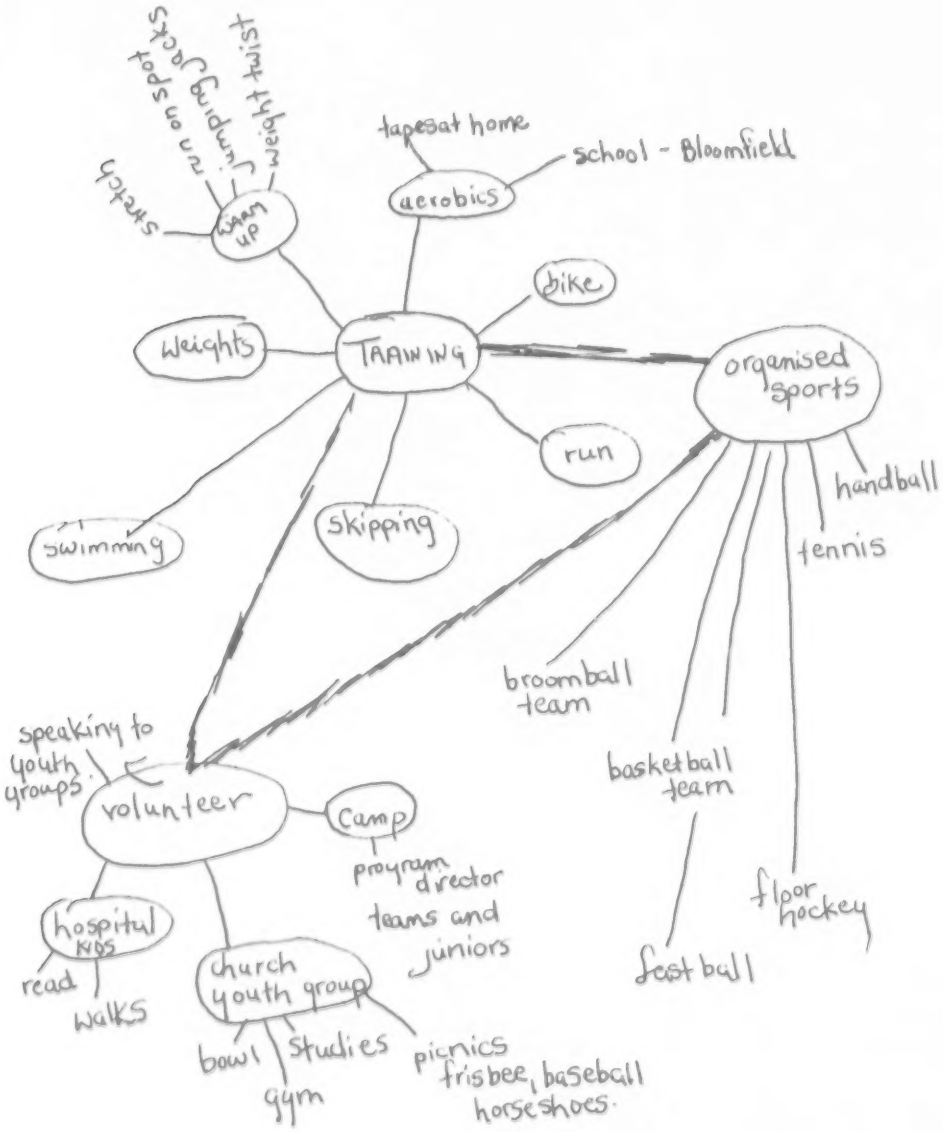

There were eight of us and we were T all the s
1
Good Man
5
He like To play games and tell S all the Time
fun prosi
2
Loving
every thing He did and said you feel the Love coming from him
Father
2
Very Caring
Lots of hugs He always say how was your day
6
cigar
You could Smell the Smoke on him
4
Work hard
He got up E. every day and went To Work
3
allways there
When sone thing went wrong He was right there
7
nice Looking
He was small He was dark and had hair like silk

At the next session, she was sufficiently organized to begin writing her paragraph. Using the numbered brainstorm, she had plenty of support to write her paragraph.

there were eight of us And we were treated all the same. He all gave lots of hugs. He aways say how was your day. Every thing He say and did you cold. feel his sad. When some thing went wrong he was right there He got up early very day and went to work. He like to play games and tell stays all the time. you could smell the smoke on him. He was nice looking. He was a dark man. He was small and had hair like silk.

Brainstorm Sample #3:
Training

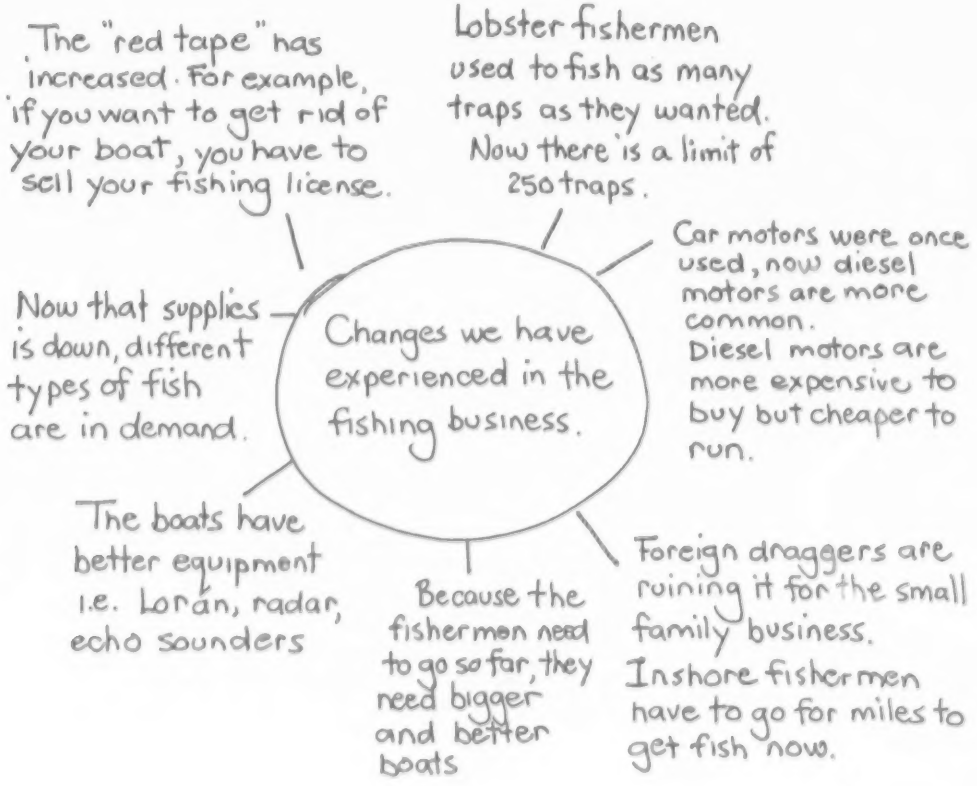
Brainstorms are great ways to help people identify their interests, experiences and knowledge. This basic level writer was quite comfortable talking about his background experiences while the tutor wrote the information in a brainstorm. As the tutor placed the ideas on the page, he asked, "Do we make this a new category or is this idea part of something which is already here?" In this way, the learner was invited to read along and make choices about how the brainstorm would be organized.



Brainstorm Sample #4:

Changes We Have Experienced in the Fishing Business

Brainstorms are useful ways to record group discussions. This discussion among members of fishing families provided the basis for a ten-month course.


The "red tape" has increased. For example, if you want to get rid of your boat, you have to sell your fishing license.
Lobster fishermen used to fish as many traps as they wanted. Now there is a limit of 250 traps.
Car motors were once used, now diesel motors are more common. Diesel motors are more expensive to buy but cheaper to run.
Now that supplies is down, different types of fish are in demand.
Changes we have experienced in the fishing business.
The boats have better equipment i.e. Loran, radar, echo sounders
Because the fishermen need to go so far, they need bigger and better boats
Foreign draggers are ruining it for the small family business. Inshore fishermen have to go for miles to get fish now.

Choral Reading

Choral Reading

Choral reading allows the tutor/instructor/teacher and learner to read together. It is a good way for beginning readers to hear the rhythm (speed, tone, volume, pitch) of fluent reading.

Follow these steps:

1. Learners should choose what they want to read. They may select material that is interesting and useful to them, but that is too difficult for independent reading.
2. Read the difficult parts together. Ask learners to read out loud with you so that your voices are reading at the same time. Learners may read one word behind you, but their participation should be encouraged. Keep the reading pace smooth.
3. Take frequent breaks to discuss the meaning of the material.
4. When learners seem more confident, let your voice fade away and see if they continue reading independently. If they hesitate, return to choral reading.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

Beginning readers will learn to apply fluent reading strategies more easily if they are assisted with the difficult parts of texts.

Self-conscious readers who put equal emphasis on every word will benefit from choral reading. It enables them to hear what fluent reading sounds like.

Learners attempting to read new and difficult material may benefit from choral reading. It allows them to get used to the language, style and ideas being presented.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Fluent reading strategies, especially prediction skills, are reinforced. Frequent discussions help learners to focus on reading for meaning.

Risk taking is required when reading new and difficult material.

All three cueing systems (grapho-phonemic, syntactic, semantic) are being used as learners hear the sounds, structural flow and story line of the text.

How to handle problems which may arise

Overuse of choral reading may encourage dependency. Learners may want you to help them at every falter. Independent reading is still the desired goal. Use a mixture of choral and assisted reading techniques and encourage learners to try to read independently.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

More fluent readers can assist hesitant readers by using choral reading.

Small groups may occasionally choose to read chorally. Since this activity may bring back difficult memories of forced oral reading during school, this should be presented as a matter of choice.

Read texts that require different forms of expression. Plays are particularly good for illustrating expression.

Tips for Level A or B

Assist beginning readers through choral reading whenever they get tired or bogged down in a text.

Use choral reading at the beginning of a session as a warm-up or at the end to wind down.

Use choral reading to introduce unfamiliar topics.

Tips for Level C or D

Level C or D readers may need choral reading when they get frustrated, perhaps during the middle of long or confusing passages.

Cloze

Cloze

Cloze is an activity that encourages prediction strategies. Words or phrases that are predictable are deleted throughout a text. Learners then read the text, filling in the blanks with a word or phrase which makes sense.

Follow these steps:

1. Photocopy a short complete passage at an appropriate reading level. Delete some of the words. For a beginning reader, delete the more predictable nouns. For more advanced readers, a random selection of words will do. Keep the first sentence intact.
2. Learners read the passage, out loud or silently, trying to insert an appropriate word into the blanks. Encourage learners "to read around" the blank, thinking about the ideas which come before and after.
3. Very hesitant readers will benefit from thinking up several possible words which make sense when fit into the text.
4. Discuss how these words were selected. What reading strategies were required? Were these strategies effective? How can these be used during regular reading?

Who will benefit from this activity?

Learners who tend to read word by word, or who stop reading completely whenever they do not know a word will benefit from reading cloze passages.

Learners who consistently leave out particular words or parts of words will be required to pay attention to these words when they are deleted from the text.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Fluent reading strategies such as reading ahead, re-reading, substitution and prediction are developed and reinforced using cloze.

Learners can discuss how they attempted to fill in the missing parts. This will help them to develop an understanding of their reading strengths and weaknesses.

How to handle problems which may arise

Cloze can seem like a convenient activity to do as independent written work. However, the purpose of the activity is to develop fluent reading strategies. If it becomes independent busy work (fill-in-the-blanks), it is not being used effectively.

Cloze activities should be open-ended, without one right answer. Pre-packaged cloze exercises often include answer keys. These should be avoided. They do not encourage fluent reading strategies such as risk taking and substitution. They only reinforce incorrect views about reading – ie. that reading should be perfect.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Small groups can work on cloze passages together. The most effective part of this activity is discussing how suggestions for the blanks were created.

Some learners can create cloze texts for others. This is good when a group includes learners at a variety of levels.

Cloze texts can be published in newsletters. Completed variations of these passages can be posted, circulated or published in later editions.

Tips for Level A or B

Cloze is most effective with beginning readers if there is someone to assist during the reading. Talking learners through the possibilities and the process of using prediction, reading ahead, re-reading and confirming makes cloze a particularly effective technique to reinforce good reading strategies. Stress that substitutions must make sense in the passage.

If learners substitute words which do not make sense in the passage, tutors and instructors should read the passage back aloud and include the substitutions which learners used. The tutor or instructor can then ask the learners if the passage made sense.

Tips for Level C or D

Readers at these levels may need to focus on the word endings in order to fully understand the passage. Cloze passages which delete word endings can be created to encourage learners to do this.

Cloze activities can also be created to help understand parts of speech (i.e. nouns could be left out in one passage, verbs and adjectives in another).

Cloze Sample #1:
Visit to the Nova Scotia Museum

One tutor-learner pair visited the Nova Scotia Museum and wrote about their recollections of the trip. This story was then used as a cloze exercise and was published in a program newsletter. The process was effective and the feedback confidence boosting.

Visit to the Nova Scotia Museum

First we saw pictures of Peggy's Cove. I have never been to Peggy's Cove. It would be _____ to visit and see what it's like in person.

Next we saw the old painted stagecoach which _____ from Halifax to Truro and took all day. It was interesting to see how they _____ the luggage on the back and top of the coach. The driver had to sit outside.

The scene I liked the _____ was the moose with the lake and woods scene behind. We had to feel if there was glass; it was _____ real.

It's the first time I've been to a _____ and I enjoyed it.

Cloze Sample #2:
Prepositions

This instructor used health and safety materials to develop a cloze exercise that focused on prepositions. The instructor did not, however, use the term prepositions when the exercise was presented. Instead, she talked about short word usage. People do not always need to know correct terminology – they just need to understand correct usage.

WHMIS

Employers are required ___ law to provide health and safety training ___ employees exposed to hazardous materials.

Employers train employees ___ several areas.

They teach the general content and importance ___ information on a workplace label.

They teach the general content and importance of information ___ a MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet).

They teach the proper use, storage, handling and disposal ___ hazardous materials.

They teach the steps to be followed ___ case ___ an emergency involving a hazardous material.

Use "by", "for", "in" and "of" to complete the above sentences.

Cloze Sample #3:

Past Tense

This tutor used a short article on a baseball player to develop a cloze exercise that focused on past tense. Before the exercise was presented, the tutor discussed how time affects verb tense.

A First For Fergie

Ferguson Jenkins was the first Canadian to be named into baseball's Hall of Fame last week. But when Fergie first _____ to play ball in Chatham, Ontario, he _____ put "out in right field" – hardly the position of choice for future professionals.

He _____ not pitch a game until he_____15-years old, when the two regular starters on his bantam team _____both injured.

But the talent _____ there from the beginning. In that first game, Mr. Jenkins _____ a two-hitter and _____ out 15 batters.

He _____ on to complete several 20-game seasons in the big leagues. A true Hall of Famer, indeed.

Games

Games

Games are fun for everyone. They put learning on the lighter side, while still requiring an application of many literacy and numeracy skills. The fun factor gives them "take-out" value, as they are often taken home and played with other family members.

Many variations of popular games can be homemade for tutoring sessions such as Scrabble, Hangman, Bingo, Pictionary, Monopoly, Yahtzee, and so on. Card games, darts, dominos, etc. can also be used to develop math skills.

Here are several common problem areas which can be addressed by game activities. These game activities can be developed by tutors, teachers and instructors. Look in the regional Literacy Resource Centre for more ideas.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Problem solving. Many people have trouble thinking creatively when they encounter a problem. This exercise asks people to recognize specific areas of concern, and to spend time trying to work out a series of possible solutions.

Activity: Make a 'bug list'. Have learners list five things/situations that really bug them. Have them pick two and develop a number of solutions. Discuss which solution is the most feasible and why.

Sentence building. Recognizing the 'who' (subject) and 'what' it does (verb) is often difficult. These components are the core features of any sentence and are important to understand in order to recognize if a sentence is complete or not.

Activity: Bring in pictures from newspapers or magazines. Take turns identifying 'who' is doing 'what' in each picture. Then take turns making up sentences which include this information. Once learners are comfortable identifying 'who' and 'what', have them identify 'where', 'when' and 'why' the activity is taking place. For fun, try making up trick sentences for each other to see if the incomplete ideas are caught.

Time and sequence. An understanding of time and sequence is essential in order to follow ideas in most books. Sequencing is an essential organizational skill for writing, as well as for oral expression.

Activity: Photocopy a cartoon strip, cut each frame, then rearrange the frames into sequential order. For variety, blank out the words that characters say and have learners fill in each frame with what they think the characters are saying. Discuss variations in time and sequence.

Spelling, vocabulary development. Poor spelling skills and limited vocabulary are common concerns among learners. Games are often helpful for developing spelling skills and building vocabulary.

Activity: Many workbooks include crosswords which are enjoyable and helpful for focussing attention on spelling and definition. However, these ready-made crosswords do not necessarily use the words which are problematic for learners. Try working with learners to make up crosswords, thinking up suitable definitions or clues, and making up the correct crossword layout.

Reading for enjoyment. Many adult students see reading as an activity that is always associated with class work. They believe that all reading must be discussed and analyzed.

Activity: Try reading silently for ten minutes each session without interruption and without initiating other work. This activity should involve learners, as well as tutors and instructors. The material being read can be on any topic, but it is read just for pleasure.

Developing expressive language skills. As learners write and read more, they need to develop skills for expressing their ideas clearly. This involves building vocabulary and recognizing the descriptive parts of speech.

Activity: Conceal an object in a bag. Learners take turns reaching into the bag and describing the unknown object. List these descriptive words and later write a short paragraph or poem using the words listed. Once the text is finished, take the object from the bag and compare it to the description.

Understanding letter-sound relationships. Mastering all the letter-sound relationships in English is not essential for fluent reading, yet many learners need to have some proficiency with letter-sound relationships when writing and reading. Some learners do not benefit from doing mini-lessons when trying to strengthen these skills. For these people, any focus on this area may cause frustration. However, others will benefit from short and fun activities to strengthen these skills.

Activity: Make a domino game by writing words commonly used by learners on cards. Divide the cards evenly among the players. Take turns setting a word card down which has the same sound as one of the cards already on the table. If a person cannot play any of his/her cards, then s/he must draw from the deck. The first person to use all their cards wins. For variety, try matching only middle sounds or end sounds.

Recognizing word families. Looking for relationships and patterns in words allows learners to understand how words are built and shaped. Some learners may benefit from working on this area during mini-lessons and applying it when reading or spelling.

Activity: Make a game board with a path of squares drawn from start to finish. In each square, print or write a word that the learners find difficult to remember. On game cards, write down features about these troublesome words such as "silent e", "rhymes with tack", etc. on game cards. One of the game cards should read "go to finish". Take turns reading the cards and moving a marker around the board until one person reaches the finish.

Learning the times table. Memorizing multiplication and division facts is not easy for many students. Tables and charts which present this information can be used as game boards to help students learn multiplication and division facts.

Activity:

- Make a copy of a blank multiplication and division chart. This will be the game board. There is a blank chart at the end of Chapter 3 (Math).
- Cut out 81 round or square markers from construction paper.
- Write the 81 products (up to 9 x 9) on the 81 markers.
- Start the game by placing these markers face down on a table and shuffling them.
- Each person then draws one marker and, in turn, places it in the appropriate square on the multiplication and division chart (i.e. if the marker 16 is picked, it could be placed on any one of three squares – 4x4, 2x8, 8x2).
- Continue to play until all markers are used.

*For variety, place a time limit on the play. Try to put the markers down on the correct square as fast as possible. Add 30 seconds to the overall time for each marker placed in the wrong square.

Interviews And Surveys

Interviews and Surveys

Learners come to upgrading programs with a wealth of information and experiences. Interviews and surveys can put these natural resources to work while involving everyone in the program. People are needed to make up the questions or survey form, to do the interviews and to compile the results. This activity also offers opportunities to tie the results into math work.

1. Brainstorm about a topic of interest. See *Brainstorm* activities.
2. Consider what parts of the selected topic lend themselves to a survey or interview. Determine if the information needed or desired is best revealed through a person-to-person interview or through a survey.
3. Brainstorm, discuss, and list questions which might be used for the interview/survey. Take time to do this (more than one session) so that other questions can be added or inappropriate ones taken out.
4. Organize the questions. In what order should they be asked? Why?
5. Rewrite or type the survey/interview form. This could be a good opportunity to practice and improve handwriting skills.
6. Practice asking the interview questions and recording the answers. Discuss note-taking tips such as recording main ideas, not writing in full sentences, writing in lower case letters, spelling words of which they are not sure, etc. Some of the words they are likely to encounter during the interviews could be written at the bottom of the form for assistance.
7. Conduct the interviews or surveys. Some people may have to learn how to set up and schedule interviews. Some interviews might have to take place on the phone and learners may need to develop telephone and time management skills.
8. Gather responses, tally the results and write a report. The usual process of writing a rough and final draft applies here. Learners will:
    - make changes by adding, deleting or rearranging the ideas
    - self-correct for spelling and grammar errors
    - go over the almost finished product again with you to understand any other areas which need to be cleaned up
    - include problematic words in their personal dictionary. See the activity, *Personal Dictionary*, for ideas.
9. Write or type a final draft. Math skills can be used to figure out the results, percentages of certain responses, etc.
10. The results of the survey might lead to follow-up activities. For example, if most of the people interviewed felt that babysitting was a problem, learners might pursue options to resolve this problem.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

Learners who find it difficult to talk to people may find this an excellent ice breaker. It provides a structure for asking questions and gathering information.

Beginning readers and writers may find this a safe activity. There is a great deal of repetition which builds the confidence and fluency of new readers. Initially, it may be easier for them to do interviews by phone with a few short questions.

Learners who find it hard to settle into an activity, or who find it hard to focus their attention on one activity, may become enthusiastic about doing an interview. There is structure and repetition, without the activity being the same every time.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Social interaction. Some participants in programs are motivated by positive social contact. Activities which build on this need are likely to be successful in motivating future learning.

Problem solving. Working with people means solving problems. Learners will develop confidence in their abilities to handle a broad range of situations.

Reading. Repetitive reading of the interview questions or the survey form will reinforce, in a purposeful way, fluent reading strategies.

Writing. Making notes from people's interview responses is not easy. This activity provides practice at note-taking, but for a purpose. People who need to write reports in the workplace or further upgrading courses will find this an important skill.

How to handle problems which may arise

You will want to check the interview questions or surveys before learners go into the community or workplace to make sure that they are appropriate.

You may need to get approval for these interviews. Trial runs may be helpful to get the 'bugs out' before going public.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Surveys or interviews are easily done with groups. They can be scheduled into the daily lesson by doing a step a day. Each member of the group can complete a set number of interviews or surveys. The whole group can participate in reading and compiling the results which can take the form of reports, charts, tables, etc. and be published in a newsletter. Learners may initially want to interview each other to become comfortable with this activity.

Tips for Level A and B

It may be easier for beginning readers and writers to do interviews by phone with a few short questions. This will keep them from being embarrassed about their writing skills.

Learners may ask if they can tape the responses and transcribe the answers at their own speed at a later time. One or two short questions should be sufficient.

Tips for Level C and D

Note-taking is a very difficult skill. One or two practice sessions will probably not be enough, so Level C and D learners may want to make up practice questions and spend some sessions trying out their skills with each other. If a group is involved, learners could discuss and trade tips about making note-taking easier.

Interviews and Surveys Sample:
Ray Downey Interview

The rough draft and final typed version of this interview were written with the assistance of a tutor. The final version was published in newspaper form in the program newsletter.

Before the Medal
A grandmother's prediction –
Interview Sept 21/88

Reporter: You have 3 grandsons who are boxers. Is that right?

Ida: Yes, they are Bill Robart, Glen Robart and Ray Downey

are they good boxers?
Yes all of them are

which one is in Seoul?
That's Ray. He is on the Canadian Boxing team.

Do you think he will win a medal?

"RAY WILL WIN A MEDAL."

How long has he been boxing?
Ray has been boxing since he was 9 years old and he will be 20 years old on Friday, Sept. 23.

An Exclusive Interview With Ray Downey's Grandmother !!

Reporter: You have three sons who are boxers. Is that right?

Ida: Yes, they are Bill Robart, Glen Robart and Ray Downey.

Reporter: Are they good boxers?

Ida: Yes, all of them are good boxers.

Reporter: Which one is in Seoul?

Ida: That's Ray. He is on the Canadian boxing team.

Reporter: Do you think he will win a medal?

Ida: HE WILL WIN A MEDAL!

Reporter: How long has he been boxing?

Ida: He has been boxing since he was 9 years old and he will be 20 years old on Friday, September 23rd.

*** Ray did win a medal. He returned to Halifax from Seoul with his Olympic Bronze medal.

Journals

Journals

A journal is a booklet in which learners write freely about any topic without worrying about the mechanics of writing. Journals provide learners with an opportunity to express their thoughts on paper. Tutors and instructors can read journal entries and respond to them in a direct and personal manner.

Follow these steps:

1. Use a scribbler or log book to record journal entries. Have learners write in their journals as time permits. Some people find time to write daily, others write regularly each week. Length of entries should not be a consideration.
2. Encourage learners to consult their personal dictionaries if they have questions about spelling or punctuation. Don't spend time worrying about every spelling error. A journal is a place for free writing, not for error-free writing.
3. Respond to the journals on average once a week. Some tutors may want to respond in a quiet moment, apart from the tutoring/instructing atmosphere. Others may want to read the entries over with learners and respond on the spot.

   The quality and sincerity of the responses are important to learners. If tutors correct every mistake, learners will not be encouraged to write more. Entries will become careful and skimpy. If you respond in a way that shows you have read and considered their thoughts seriously, then a real dialogue can begin. One useful format is to respond to journal entries in a sentence or two and then ask questions about the entry.
4. Continue this written exchange. Look for improvements in the length or quality of entries. If your responses are stimulating enough to give learners ideas to write about, then you can expect longer and more interesting entries in return.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

People who have trouble writing on the spot may find that journals provide them with a way to put their ideas down on paper.

Learners who have a number of personal problems and difficulties may appreciate using the journal to discuss their problems.

Learners who miss a number of sessions because of poor health, babysitting or transportation problems, changing work schedules, etc., may find that keeping a journal is an activity that keeps them writing regularly even when they cannot attend the sessions.

People who do not feel comfortable speaking in group may use a journal to express their thoughts and concerns. This allows everyone in a group to participate in discussions.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Writing. Journal writing allows writers at the basic level to write freely, without worrying about content, spelling or grammar.

Problem-solving. Some people find that writing in journals is a helpful way to work out personal problems. After putting their thoughts down on paper, learners often find ways to resolve or deal with their concerns.

How to handle problems which may arise

Some learners find it difficult to start writing in a journal. Left to their own devices, they seem to get caught in the trap of "I can't do that" or "It's just a journal." Consequently, their journal entries do not seem to improve in length or quality. To assist writing, focus the journal entry on a specific topic by providing sentence starters. Pick the topic before the next session to give learners time to think about what they might say. Use *Language Experience* and *Written Conversation* activities to help hesitant writers.

Sometimes journal writing seems like homework and learners may not want to do it. They may feel that they are not benefitting from this kind of writing. If this is the case, leave journal writing for a while and focus on a writing activity that learners find more active. Try a writing activity which can be published, mailed or completed by a certain date.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Learners may prefer to exchange journals with each other rather than with a tutor or instructor.

Some learners may want to keep their journal completely private, more like a personal diary.

Some learners may agree to turn their journals into regular columns for the newsletter.

Small groups may want to keep a shared journal – like a class log book – to record class discussions.

Tips for Level A and B

Encourage learners to write in their journal at least every session. Trying to write a sentence or two everyday about daily activities may not be the most inspired form of writing, but the repetition and independence helps to build confidence in writing.

Use *Language Experience* and *Written Conversation* activities to assist writers at the beginning level. Journals may require too much independent writing for them.

Pick the journal topic before the next session. This allows learners time to think about the topic.

Tips for Level C and D

Place a time limit on journal writing. If there is no appreciable improvement in the quantity of the journal writings, try giving learners ten minutes to write something. Count the number of lines written. Repeat this every so often and see if the limit can be extended each time. Some learners have found that this has forced them to write faster, to think more about the ideas and not be so concerned about their spelling and handwriting. Sometimes this can make writing more fluid.

Encourage learners to use scrap paper. The text can then be developed before it is entered in the journal.

Journal Sample #1:
I Feel Angry

A hesitant writer found daily journal writing helpful and was surprised as she found herself enjoying writing. She used the quiet moments writing to reflect on her day.

I feel angry

I feel angry when
I go To sTart my car
and it doesn't sTarT.
I feel angry when my
Car doors freeZe in
The Winter Time
and I have To TaKe
a Taxi To worK and
back home again.
I Feel angy when The
dogs barKs all nighT
and I Can get any
Sleep

Journal Sample #2:
The Strength I Have Is

Journals can allow members of a group to focus on the problems and concerns of working in groups. This journal entry allowed a woman working in a small business to reflect on what positive attributes she brought to the group. The others from the work team wrote similar journals and the resulting discussion enabled the group to think positively about working together effectively.

The strength I have is:

1. To be able to find some good in everyone. Even tho they have hurt you very badly.
2. Not to hold grudges.
3. To be able to have respect for myself and others.
   Not to look down on someone who has sinned "because I am not perfect either"!
4. To help people with problems.
   To give love to children who need me and people as such. To see needs of people and help them.
   To be happy and make everyone else happy.

Journal Sample #3:
Blessings

This learner felt depressed and wanted to quit the program. With the help of his tutor and this journal entry, he stuck with it. He said later, "These ideas are not just important to me, they are precious to me."

Blessings - Good things to think about

(1) I have a good family A sister who loves me and cares for me.

(2) I have brothers who care for me.

(3) I have a job at the YMCA I get $450.00 a month. I save some of it and spend some on my self.

(4) I get food and clothing allowances.

(5) I don't have to pay my rent. The walfare pays my rent.

(6) I have my freedom.

(7) I have a counsellor who stays with me and helps me.

(8) I Have good friends.

(9) I have all my limbs and ~~I go were ever~~ I can go wherever I want

(10) I have a generally healthy body and mind.

When I get (Depressed) I should read these good things.

Family
Friends
Food + Clothing
Rent
Freedom
Money
Health
Counsellor
Job

I have to stop worrying

I Worry too much !!

Always think Positive

Journal Sample #4:
Group Log

All members in the group wrote an entry in the journal at some point during the session. This allowed members who were hesitant to speak up in class to share their thoughts.

Tuesday night

I feel this course is going to help us in the work area as well as out side. At first I was a worried about it, due to being older and lacking education. I was worried about not being able to keep up. But I don't think this so. Thanks for being so helpful.

I really enjoy this course. I am learning already. The roads are slippery as hell tonite.

I really think that when someone starts working at this plant that they should be given a booklet on the words used in the plant. A booklet of the list of words, should be put out by the company so every department knows them, as they differ in each department.

I feel management should give more praise to their workers. Not just leadhands giving praise

Did we ever have a snow storm this weekend. We have about 10" now.

Language Experience

Language Experience

Language experience allows learners to compose writing even if they have difficulty getting their ideas down on paper. Beginning writers can develop their own relevant, adult-oriented reading material.

Follow these steps.

1. Find a topic that is personally exciting to learners. It may be necessary to discuss various topics until you narrow it down to one.
2. Have learners dictate what they know about the topic as well as their feelings about it. Ask, "How do you want to say this? How shall I put this down?" If necessary, ask questions to draw out more information.
3. Print exactly what learners say. Ask learners if they prefer to read printing or script. When possible, leave double space and, for easier reading, use capital and small letters.
4. Read through the finished piece together. If necessary, you read first. Follow with a shared reading. Finish with learners reading alone. Give assistance only when needed.
5. During reading, do not rush. Help when they get stuck, but do not jump in too quickly.
6. Watch what learners do while reading. What reading strategies are they using?
7. Use the language experience story for future sessions. For example:
    - Read it.
    - Cut up a copy of the story into phrases or words. Remake the original, rearrange the order, or build new sentences.
    - Ask learners to copy the story between sessions.
    - Delete the highly predictable words. Discuss what other words would make sense in the passage.
    - Ask learners to choose five words from the text that they would like to learn. For some, this may mean rereading the text and paying special attention to these words. Others may want to write the words in a personal dictionary.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

Level A and B learners who are just becoming comfortable with reading.

Learners who do not try to make sense of what they are reading. Language experience reinforces the idea that reading is making sense of a text and that it is a way to understand what others have to say.

Very hesitant composers. They can concentrate on thinking up and shaping the ideas. Gradually, they can take over the actual writing. These learners also gain from *Brainstorm* and *Text Organization* activities.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Fluent reading strategies.

Composition skills which will be needed for independent written work. Learners can come to understand how they decide what to write and how to organize this information.

How to handle problems which may arise

Learners may become so comfortable with someone else writing that they may not want to do it themselves. Tutors and instructors should encourage them to write parts of the text whenever possible.

Some beginning readers may dictate and read their language experience stories for a period of time without seeming to make progress towards independent reading. If this is the case, you will need to write the story into an easy-to-read format. Use the ideas dictated by the learner, but write them in a way which allows the sentence structure to be repeated.

For example, a series of explanations about the parts of a car could be written:

> "The carburetor is the part of the car which... It makes the engine..."
> "The radiator is the part of the car which... It makes the engine..."

Learners can begin to predict how the sentences will begin and what the text may include.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Use language experience stories to record ideas about topics of interest to learners. These stories could be about their jobs, books they have read, news events, or trips they have taken.

Produce language experience stories in a group. These may be recorded by learners who are more comfortable with writing, or by an instructor during a group discussion. Pairs of tutors and learners can do this as well.

Select photographs to accompany the language experience story. Publish the story and photographs in a newsletter or bulletin. Black and white photographs are best, but some colour photographs photocopy well enough for use.

Add to the story. Use the writing process and return to the text during future sessions to add, delete or rearrange ideas.

Use language experience stories to record ideas about a larger project or theme. These stories can be collected together in booklet form.

Type the stories and use them as reading material.

Tips for Level A and B

Sit on the right-hand side (for right-handed tutors) so that writing can be clearly seen by learners.

Change the order of the sentences in the language experience story. Have other learners try to turn it into a meaningful text. These versions can then be compared to the original.

Use choral and assisted reading to help the learner read the language experience story. You may need to write and sound out words as you go. At some point, slow down or stop reading to see if the learner continues to read the story.

Tips for Level C and D

The language experience approach may be used whenever a new writing format is introduced. This helps learners to become familiar with the new format (i.e. reports, reviews, essays, etc.) without having to write down all the information. As they become more comfortable, they can take over the writing again.

Language Experience Sample #1:
Coal Mining Experience

This language experience story was dictated by a retired coal miner. The story was the start of a series of recollections about his mining experiences. Later he took the story home and rewrote it.

Coal mining experience

I grew up in Glace Bay close to the coal mines. My father and all my brothers were miners. I started to work in the mine when I was 26 years old. I started in 10 pit In Glace Bay until it closed and then I went to 16 pit until it closed 10 years later.

Language Experience Sample #2:
The Radiator and The Air Filter

These language experience stories were written in this predictable format by the tutor to help the learner predict what the text would say. The learner was having difficulty reading the dictated stories from previous sessions.

The Radiator

The radiator is the part of the car that cools the engine. It keeps the engine from overheating by keeping the engine block cool. The radiator keeps the engine cool.

The Air Filter

The air filter is the part of the engine that cleans the engine. It takes the dirt out of the air so that the air that goes into the car is pure. The air filter keeps the engine clean.

Letter Writing

Letter Writing

What better way to use and develop writing skills than to write letters? No need to write pretend letters for practice – just write the real thing! Whether sending messages to family and friends or writing to get information, letter writing puts learners into the world of everyday literacy. And hopefully there will be a reply to read.

1. Most learners do not have to think hard to come up with a reason to write a letter. If there isn't a long lost relative to reconnect with, there is usually outstanding business to clear up, or free information to request.
2. Through discussion, learners organize the ideas which may go into the letter. A brainstorm might be useful to collect these thoughts. See the activity, *Brainstorm,* for ideas.
3. Learners write a first draft. Ask them to consider who will receive the letter to make sure that the tone is appropriate.
4. Revise the draft. As usual, consider what ideas should be added, deleted or rearranged. If the tone of the letter is important and the content is not too personal, other learners may be asked to read it and make suggestions.
5. Edit. Self-correction is always the most effective kind of correction. Everyone will learn about their writing strengths and difficulties if they have the opportunity to find their own errors.
6. Rewrite. This is a great opportunity for learners to practice their handwriting. One important letter to a friend who is away may prove to be more motivating than practicing letter formation just for practice.
7. Address the envelope.
8. For some learners or groups, a trip to the Post Office may be useful. This is not to suggest that learners are unfamiliar with the Post Office, only that such a trip may open up new possibilities for learning. For example, reading the signs, going on a tour, or learning to use the mail schedules may be beneficial and enjoyable.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

People who have reasons to write letters.

People who need to tackle the paper work required for dealing with various agencies – social service agencies, child care agencies, health care agencies, housing agencies, etc.. When people handle these problems independently and directly, they feel a sense of control over their lives.

Learners who shoulder family and personal problems may find relief in being able to correspond with sympathetic friends and family Also, pen pals may serve to reinforce that they are not alone.

People who like to talk can converse on paper to a friend.

Learners who like to work out of workbooks may want to put these skills to work in a real-world situation by writing letters.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Reading. Letters are read and reread. They make excellent reading material, requiring repetitive readings for pleasure and clarification.

Writing. Writing and revising drafts and writing a final copy are particularly useful for letter writing.

How to handle problems which may arise

Finding the appropriate tone for a letter can be tricky, especially for more formal business letters. Compare a variety of letters noticing the different tones used for different purposes. See the *Brainstorm* activity for ideas about how others organize and express their ideas in letters.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Groups can write letters together. One person records the ideas on the chalkboard or flip chart while the group composes. This can lead to lively discussions about tone, language, wording, and so on.

Programs can adopt another program as their "pen pal." Learners can write to other learners independently or in groups. Exchanges of newsletters and other publications can also be included in the letters.

"Letters to the Editor" or "Dear Ann" type letters can be included in program newsletters. These can be very successful. One program had a secret "Dear Ann" for a few years. People wrote in with concerns and situations and received thoughtful and often humourous responses from a wise (and anonymous) learner.

Tips for Level A and B

Use *Language Experience* activities to assist the beginning writer and reader with letter writing. Learners can recopy these letters for extra practice in reading, writing and handwriting.

Establish a pattern of letter writing which can be repeated: what kinds of things might be included in what parts of the letter. For example, in a family letter:

- First paragraph – thank them for their letter and answer any questions that they asked.
- Second paragraph – tell them about new events.
- Third paragraph – ask them about things they didn't mention, etc.

This kind of structure will help beginning writers feel more secure and confident when composing their ideas. However, be careful that writers do not feel that this is all they can write.

Tips for Level C and D

Learners at this level should try to write a range of letters for different purposes.

Letter Writing Sample:
Letter to Rose

This letter was written after the learner read a book written by another adult learner. The two shared similar childhood experiences.

Dear Rose!
Hi how are you?
I like your book it Remeind of my dad
when I was 9. My dad beat me up.
My Mom Loves me when she tried to help
me he beat her up too.
When my mom died, I Remeinded my dad
of her. I look like My mom.
I would say " Why me? so I ran away
to my boyfriends.
I hated my dad. He made me feel Cheap.
I would be free for 2 weeks.
Then Chuldren's aid would find me.
I would tell them abatt my dad.
They didn't beliue me.
They said it was all in my head.
and take me bake home.
Then one day my Aunt Tessil
~~saw~~ saw my dad beating me up.
She said to me you are going home with
me. and I went home with her and
I got on with my life.
Thank you for your letter
please write me back. soon.

My Address is

Mini-lessons

Mini-lessons

Mini-lessons provide learners with an opportunity to focus their attention on specific skills which need to be learned or practiced. Ten or fifteen minutes devoted to skill development which uses reading and writing material of interest to the learner can be more effective than entire sessions spent learning these skills through workbooks.

1. Use the reading, writing, spelling and grammar charts presented in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 to help learners to identify areas which need to be mastered.
2. Spend 10 or 15 minutes discussing and practising a selected skill. For example, if learners have difficulty predicting when they read, use cloze passages to encourage more fluent reading strategies (see *Cloze* activities). If apostrophes are problems, have learners identify how and why other writers use apostrophes, then have them do the same in their own writing.
3. Discuss why certain skills are being practiced, why the activities may be helpful and the difficulties and successes of these mini-lessons.
4. Use the personal dictionary to store information about these skills. This tool provides learners with easy reference and reduces the pressure they may feel to memorize.
5. Have patience! To feel comfortable using these skills, learners need to apply them independently. Workbooks help learners focus their attention on a skill, but do not necessarily facilitate a transfer of the skill to everyday life. Mini-lessons do. They are particularly effective when they help learners see how the skill can be applied to their own reading, writing or math work.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

All learners will need and appreciate learning the basics. However, many workbooks which teach basic skills for adults do not take into consideration the need for relevancy and transferability of these skills to real life situations. It is often a challenge for tutors and instructors to keep adults from spending most of their time completing workbook exercises.

Scheduling mini-lessons assures learners that time will be spent developing the skills they want and need. Short and concentrated, they keep skill work in perspective and always relevant to the present needs of learners.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Specific skills vary from learner to learner.

How to handle problems which may arise

Some learners like to know what they learn and accomplish in each session. For this reason, it is useful to keep files of completed work and work in progress up to date. Keeping a record of mini-lesson skills is also useful. You may want to list these skills in the learner's personal dictionary (see *Personal Dictionary)* or on the inside of the file folder. Add to this list whenever learners apply these skills independently during the sessions. For example, if learners begin to use fluent reading strategies, commas, etc. more independently, make note of this on the list. Include the date and the activity.

If a certain skill has been worked on over and over again with no satisfying results, discuss the questions outlined in Chapter 11, *Learning Blocks*. Examine all work completed and materials used for possible clues to why progress is not being made.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Have small groups work together on mini-lessons. Discuss how the mini-lesson develops particular reading, writing and math skills.

Have students develop mini-lessons for others in the group.

Put together a booklet outlining the group's most troublesome problem areas. Include mini-lesson activities that address these areas.

Have learners keep track of mini-lessons tried in their journals.

Tips for Level A and B

Many beginning readers and writers need mini-lessons which focus on taking risks when reading, for example, using prediction skills, substituting words which make sense, etc.

Some learners need mini-lessons on the letters of the alphabet. Use everyday examples to show the alphabet. It is easier to learn letters through writing words and sentences than through writing individual alphabet letters. Explain that there are 26 letters in the alphabet that are categorized into consonants and vowels. The vowels are **a, e, i, o, u** and sometimes **y**. The consonants are the remaining letters of the alphabet.

Use activities in *Written Conversation* to model how you form letters. Have an alphabet chart on hand to show upper and lower case letters. Spend some time on cursive writing – but beware. This can become a very mechanical activity.

Some learners may need timed mini-lessons to encourage them to put their ideas on paper without becoming overly worried about spelling, grammar word choice, style, etc.

Some learners may need mini-lessons to identify upper from lower case letters or to learn basic punctuation skills. In this case, prepare mini-lessons which encourage people to write sentences. Show learners what a sentence looks like. Use *Language Experience* and *Written Conversation* activities to point out capitals, periods and comma usage. Create a cloze exercise which leaves off all the capitals. Remember to introduce spelling, punctuation, capitalization and letter form within the learners' writing and not external to it. Demonstrate that these skills are part of the writing process.

Learners may have difficulty reading words that begin with certain sounds or letters. Concentrate first on initial consonant sounds. They tend to be more constant. Also try using rhyming words, word families, taped reading, cloze and choral/assisted reading. When preparing a mini-lesson for this, remember that English is not a perfectly spelled language. It is a disservice to learners to overemphasize letter/sound relationships. Reading does not occur when someone knows the sound of a letter. Reading occurs when grapho-phonemics, syntax and semantics are used to understand a text.

During the mini-lesson, you may want to identify key words or a key sentence for habitually confused letters. For example, if a learner has trouble distinguishing between "b", "p" and "d", s/he may select key words relevant to his or her situation (**b**asement, **p**et, **d**og) and put them in a sentence (I live in a **b**asement apartment with my **p**et **d**og.).

Make constant use of the personal dictionary to record these skills and tips for remembering them.

Tips for Level C and D

Learners at these levels may need to practice specific punctuation and grammar skills. It is more effective to look at the skill after learners have tried, perhaps unsuccessfully, to use it in their own written work. Self-correction of these writings can be built in at the end of the mini-lesson.

Learners reading more difficult material may need to learn how to stop and discuss the main ideas frequently. Mini-lessons can be used at these stopping points. They can also help develop note-taking skills.

Some Common Phonetic Generalizations

English borrows many of its words from other languages. This means that most phonics rules and generalizations have a number of exceptions. In spite of this, mini-lessons that develop letter-sound relationships which people find difficult are valuable in assisting with reading. While there is no single correct way to teach letter-sound relationships, tutors and instructors may find the following phonetic generalizations useful in preparing mini-lessons.

The information is grouped according to the type of letter sound pattern; one letter, one sound – two letters, one sound, etc. Standard terms are used here, but it is not necessary to know all the terms to use them when teaching. Tutors and instructors should always try to illustrate letter-sound relationships within the context of a sentence or short text. These sentences and text should relate to students' experiences. They should not be made up of nonsense, rhyming words.

eg: Jill can sip a pill, will it fit?
Tim can dip a hill, will it fit?

These sentences do not make sense. Reading only occurs when readers can extract meaning from the text. This involves the use of all three cueing systems – grapho-phonemic, syntactic and semantic. Reading does not occur just because someone knows all the sounds.

Consonants. Most single consonants represent one sound: b, d, f, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z. The consonants c, g, s and x can represent two or more sounds.

c – cereal, came
g – genuine, goat
s – surely, single, rose
x – excited, fox, xylophone

Teach single consonants as they occur at the beginning of words.

Consonant blends. A consonant blend is a combination of two or more consonants that represent their sounds blended together. These blends usually occur at the beginning or end of a word.

Examples of beginning blends include:

bl, cl, fl, gl, pl, sl
br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr
sc, sk, sm, sn, sp, st, sw
sch, scr, spl, spr, sq, str
dw, tw

- Combine word families with these blends to generate a variety of words, eg – **it**: slit, grit, spit, split, twit

Examples of end blends include:

ll, lm, ld, lp
nd, ng, nk, nt
rt, st, ft, lt
ss, mp

- Combine end blend word families (a vowel plus an end blend) with beginning consonants and beginning consonant blends to generate a variety of words. eg. **ill**: hill, mill, pill, sill, till, drill, skill, spill

Consonant diagraphs. A consonant diagraph is a combination of consonants that represents one sound. This sound is different from either sound that it represents on its own. While most diagraphs represent one sound – ch, gh, ph, sh, shr, thr, sch – a few represent more than one sound – th (thin, those), wh (what, who).

Diagraphs may occur at the beginning or end of a word.

- Combine diagraphs with single consonants, consonant blends, word families or end blend word families to generate words, eg: chop, shop, shred, ghost, shelf.

Some consonants, when combined with other letters, are not pronounced:

(l)k	talk, caulk
(k)n	knot, knight
i(gh)t	right, tight
m(b)	bomb, tomb
(w)r	write, wrist

Vowels. There are five vowels – a, e, i o, u – and sometimes y. Every word must have at least one vowel in order to be a word. Unlike most consonant sounds, vowel sounds are not constant. There are numerous rules governing the sound a vowel makes and even more exceptions to these rules. There are, however, a number of generalizations which may assist students with vowel sounds.

Long vowels: A single vowel is long when it sounds the same as its letter name. When a vowel is followed by a consonant and an e, it usually represents a long sound, eg: cake, hide, dice, joke, game.

Short vowels: Usually a single vowel is short when it is positioned between two consonants, eg: sad, sip, bed, dig, sled. Short vowels may also occur at the beginning of a word, eg: is, am, enter, until.

Vowel diagraphs. A vowel diagraph is a combination of two vowels that represent one sound.

Usually, the sound is the long sound of the first letter, eg: bead, creak, toast, bait. This generalization is often remembered as follows: When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking (it sounds like its letter name).

Sometimes, the sound is the short sound of the letter, eg: bread, dread.

Vowel dipthongs. A vowel dipthong is a combination of two vowels that represent one sound. This sound is different from that which either sound represents on its own, eg: boil, boy, caught.

Vowels controlled by r, l and w. Vowels followed by r, l or w take on a unique sound, eg: tar, fir, cold, belt, saw, sew.

Miscellaneous vowel combinations. Some vowel combinations are neither diagraphs nor dipthongs. eg: bough, tough, eight, either.

Some students find visual images help them to identify vowel sounds. Tutors and instructors may want to use tape recorders to tape students reading. Students can then use the tape to hear how they identify vowel sounds.

Key words which assist students in remembering troublesome vowel sounds should be stored in the students' personal dictionary. Word games (See *Games* activities) are also useful in developing letter-sound associations.

Note: This information is presented to help tutors and instructors plan mini-lessons. Mini-lessons should be built on a student's own vocabulary in order to help the student understand the relationship between language and his/her daily life. It is not necessary to spend entire lessons working on letter-sound activities.

Mini-Lesson Sample #1:
Spelling Chart

A tutor/student pair used this spelling chart to figure out spelling strategies.

How I spelled the word	Correct spelling	Words sound very similar or look similar	Added or forgot final "e"	Left out a letter	Mixed letters up	Left off an ending "ed" "ing" "s"	A problem with apostrophe "s"
now	→ know	✓					
anthing	→ anything			✓			
take	→ talk	✓					
go	→ going					✓	
did	→ do	✓					
meand	→ mind				✓		

Mini-Lesson Sample #2:

Read the word. Write the word that it comes from.

Mini-lessons work best when they deal with problem areas that relate to students' work. The instructor used this exercise to assist one student in a group.

Read the word. Write the two words that it comes from.

1. didn't did NOT
2. haven't have NOT
3. what's WHAT is
4. aren't are NOT
5. I'm I AM
6. you're you Are
7. don't do NOT
8. can't CAN NOT

Read the word. Then write the two words that you see in it.

1. paycheque pAy cheque
2. airplane Air plAne
3. spaceship SpAc Ship
4. everywhere every where
5. understand under STAND
6. everyone every one

Drop the ending from each word. Write the root word.

1. dirty dirt
2. meeting meet
3. speaker speak
4. cooler cool
5. bigger big
6. nearly neAr
7. remembered remember
8. died die
9. married MArri
10. hugged hugg
11. kissed Kis
12. getting get
13. giving give
14. missing miss
15. quitting quitt
16. needed Need
17. classes cIASS
18. passing pASS
19. countries countre
20. interested interest
21. placing plACi
22. believed believe
23. studies studi
24. babies bAbie

Mini-Lesson Sample #3:
Visual Clues

Mini-lessons are effective when they deal with problems on the spot. Here the instructor took several minutes to use visual illustrations to assist students with words they found difficult.

Mini-Lesson Sample #4:
Letter-sound Relationships

Here the instructor used a language experience story to help a student identify letter-sound relationships that the student found difficult.

Life in a Small Community

Life is different in a small community because there's not much traffic. You know your neighbors better and you don't have to worry about street lights! In the countryside you don't have the noise of the city. The countryside is very pretty in winter with the snow on the trees. The lakes freeze up and all the people go skating with their friends and families.

1. Find two words with "ee" in them. Write them here. freeze, street

What other words do you know that sound the same?

street, freeze
beet, breeze
feet, trees

2. Find two words with "ow" in them. Write them here.

snow
know

What other words do you know that sound the same?

snow, bow
know, tow
grow, sow

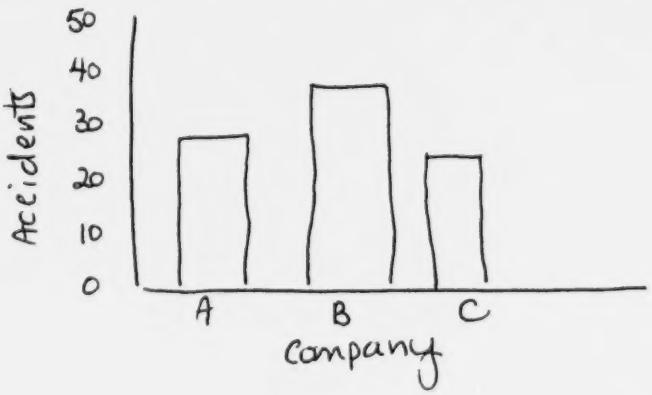
Mini-Lesson Sample #5:
Graphs

A tutor used information from one student's place of work to develop these graphs to help the student understand how to read a graph.

Reading Graphs

Judging the Relevance of material

A) Number of serious accidents in 3 plants (1988)

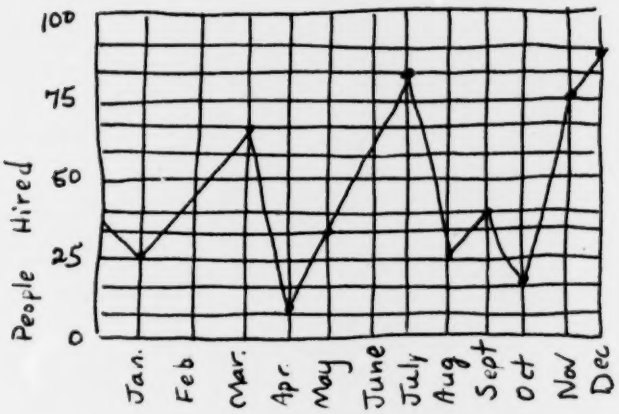


Which company reported more than 35 serious accidents in 1988?

- C
- all of them
- none of them

Reading Graphs

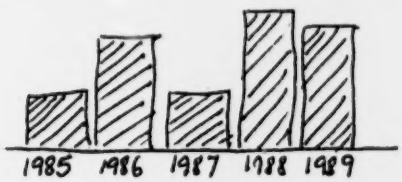
B)



In which two months were the same number of people hired?

- January and October
- March and June
- January and August

C) Tons of cotton sold



In which year was the greatest amount of cotton sold? 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 or 1989.

Mini-Lesson Sample #6:
To and Too

This mini-lesson helped a GED class to understand the difference between **to** and **too**. Again, the instructor used the context of the students' work environments to develop the mini-lesson.

Exercise with to and too

George is a millwright. Larry is one (to, too).

Ernest goes (to, too) work at 7:30 every morning.

"B" Operators work from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Purchasing agents do (to, too).

Seven thirty is (to, too) early (to, too) begin work at Lafarge, but if you are going (to,too) work here, you have (to,too).

There are only (to, too, two) ways (to, too) escape the GED, quit or die.

Trucks carry Lafarge products (to, too) various parts of the Maritimes.

(To, Too) much work and (to, too) little play makes long the day with still not enough pay.

Mini-Lesson Sample #7:
Subject/Verb

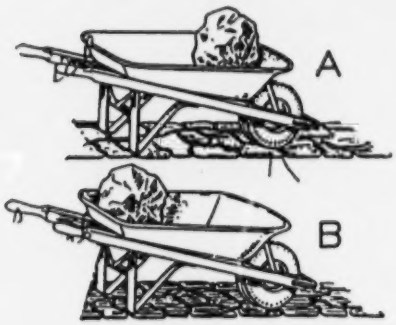
The instructor used the names of people in the class and their places of work to assist the class in identifying subject and verb.

underline subject once, underline verb once.

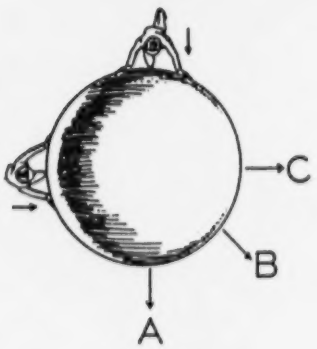
1. John works during C shift.
2. Yesterday, Bill was absent because of the flu.
3. The plant shut down over Christmas.
4. Kevin gave a talk on health and safety.
5. The supervisor asked Sally to come into the office.
6. Sam started his new job yesterday.
7. Heather is the nurse here.
8. The company pays employees every two weeks.
9. The elevator broke down.
10. The B shift went home.

Mini-Lesson Sample #8:
Test Taking

The instructor used a test that many of the students had to take to help them develop word – visual association strategies. The word omitted in each test question corresponds with the visual clue.

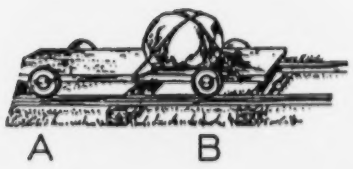


Which way will it be easier to carry the ruck in the wheelbar
_____? rock wheelbarrow
(If equal, mark C.)



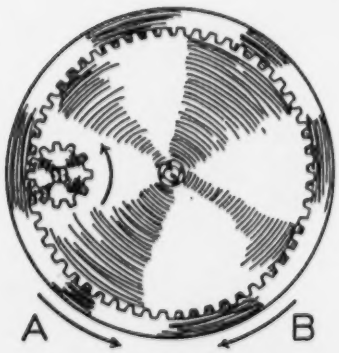
2

If the two men are pushing against the pushbd in the directions shown, in which direction is it most likely to go?



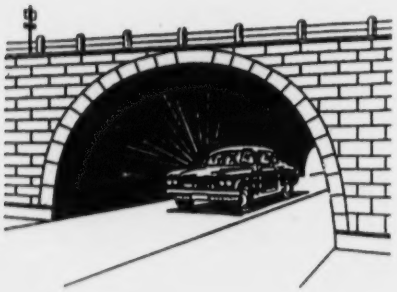
3

Which wehl presses harder against the rail?
wheels
(If equal, mark C.)



4

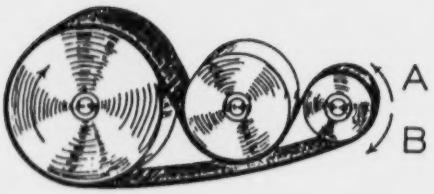
If the small wheel goes in the direction shown, in which direction will the large wheel go?
(If either, mark C.)



5

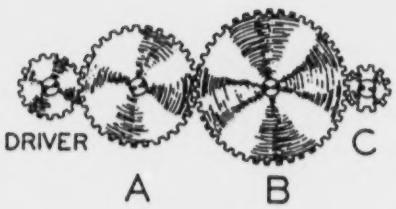
When the car is in a tunnel how will the horn sound?

(A) Louder than
(B) Less loud than normal.
(C) Normally loud.



6

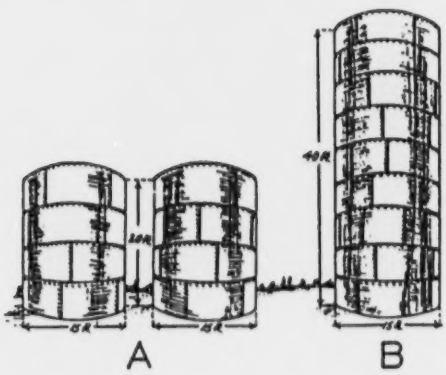
If the big wheel moves in the direction shown, in which direction will the small one move?
(If either, mark C.)



7

cog

Which cog will make the most turns in a minute?



8

Which will hold more water, the two tanks at A or the one tank at B?
(If equal, mark C.)

Movie And Book Reviews

Movie and Book Reviews

Learners are familiar with films, old and new, and often discuss their favourites during coffee breaks. So, why not put some of these thoughts down on paper for everyone to enjoy?

1. Discuss the film. Learners can record these discussions on their own or with your assistance.
2. Brainstorming is a great way to record these ideas because many different categories can be seen at a glance. You may want to record the main plot, as well as thoughts about characters, setting, acting, special effects, music, camera work, etc. Some learners will readily compare other films with the same actors, directors, screen play writers, or films based on the same author's work.
3. Read movie reviews from the newspaper or magazines. How are these reviews organized? What kind of information or opinions do they include?

   Brainstorms are also a good way to figure out how others have organized their reviews. You may create categories about brief plot summaries (without giving away the ending, of course), actors and quality of acting, directors and quality of directing, and personal opinion, etc.
4. After learners have added to the brainstorm or taken out unnecessary ideas, they should plan and organize their reviews. They may want to number their brainstorm categories in order to show what they will put first, second, third, etc.
5. Learners write a rough copy. They may want others to read it and offer comments. Ideas may be added, taken out or rearranged.
6. Learners reread the review looking for spelling and/or other errors. Problem words and phrases can be included in the personal dictionary.
7. A final copy may be published in a newsletter or shared with family and friends. The same process could be used with books.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

Youth may find movie reviews especially appealing. A popular movie may motivate them to read the book on which it was based or a book about the same topic. Comparisons can then be made between the book and the movie.

Learners who are carrying a heavy load in terms of busy schedules or everyday problems may find this a good motivator.

Programs, groups or people who have few opportunities to see movies may find it fun to plan an excursion to see a movie together. This provides an opportunity to read the newspaper movie ads, bus schedules or maps together, as well as to discuss the ideas and write a finished review.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Comparative thinking skills. Relating ideas from things that we hear on TV, see in movies, and read in books is an essential learning tool. This kind of activity can build confidence by allowing learners to compare information from sources with which they may be more familiar and comfortable.

Expressing opinions. Learners will have the opportunity to speak about their own preferences and learn to state reasons clearly.

Reading and writing. Reading a book, no matter how long, and writing the review go hand-in-hand.

How to handle problems which may arise

Learners will not be excited to read books or tell tutors about the movies they have seen if they feel that each book and movie will require an obligatory review. Reserve the reviews of special books and movies for those learners who are motivated to initiate them.

It is not always practical or possible to travel to see a film. In this case, you may want to rent a video from a local store or discuss a favourite TV show. The National Film Board office in Halifax (426-6001 or toll-free 1-800-561-7104) rents films and videos. Their video catalogue can be received free of charge. For a minimal charge, NFB will mail videos anywhere in the Atlantic provinces. The National Film Board also has special packages of videos on such topics as family violence and women's issues.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Compare related movies and books about the same topic. This could become the topic of a theme-project, ie, films about Nova Scotia, the environment, parenting, comedies, Canadian history, etc.

Parents may find it more interesting to review children's movies.

Review a movie and then compare it to the book on which it was based.

Tips for Level A and B

Use language experience to write down beginning writers' ideas.

Use brainstorming to decide how the review should be organized. For example, learners may decide that, after reading and discussing other reviews, they will:

- write a short summary of the plot
- talk about the acting and other aspects of film-making
- give a personal opinion about the film.

Keep this standard format for every review. This will make subsequent reviews easier to compose.

Use reviews as reading material when finished.

Tips for Level C and D

Encourage learners to look for subplots in the movie. Usually movies and books have subplots, and learners who are reading longer pieces can become familiar with this type of organization.

Movie and Book Review Sample #1:
The East Coast Reader

This learner wrote a review of the *East Coast Reader,* a newspaper for new readers. She included her thoughts on how one story in the paper could be extended.

The East Coast Reader

The East Coast Reader is a very good magazine. I enjoyed it very much. I liked the large print and the pictures that go beside the stories.

The short stories are really good too. The two short stories I liked the most in the issue are "Amnesty International: Human Rights Watchdog" and "Nelson Mandela: South Africa's Black Hero." The only thing I didn't like about the story on Amnesty International was that they didn't explain it fully enough. For example, they could have extended the story a little more to include why and when Amnesty International was started. Besides that, it was a really good story.

I hope that the East Coast Reader keeps running because it's a good magazine. Keep up the good work.

Movie and Book Review Sample #2:
Nobody's Perfect

This learner wrote a short paragraph on several books she had read about parenting. She felt the books would help her to better understand her own children's development.

Nobody's Perfect

I read five wonderful books about being a parent. They were very interesting to read. The books were about the mind and the body.

There are two growth charts in the books. They let you see how your baby grows. One of the charts shows how the child grows from one to six years old. The other chart lets you see how your baby develops from one to twenty-four months. I thought the growth charts were wonderful for parents who have small children.

Movie and Book Review Sample #3:
Don't Call Me Stupid

This learner wrote a short review of the film, "Don't Call Me Stupid." She included her own personal experiences with upgrading in the review.

Don't Call Me Stupid

I think this film really lets people know why its hard to get an education. It also tells people why its hard to stay in an upgrading program. When I went to school I felt like I was stupid. People told me I couldn't learn. I believed them.

Now I'm going back to school to get an education. Its not easy but I know I can do it. I know I am not stupid.

Personal Dictionary

Personal Dictionary

Learners can keep a personal dictionary to reinforce correct spelling, grammar rules, handwriting tips, etc. This is something which they can add and refer to everyday. Personal dictionaries can make people feel independent and more confident about their spelling, handwriting and grammar.

1. Purchase a small alphabetized booklet for recording phone numbers or make one by cutting a scribbler and marking each page with one letter of the alphabet. The scribbler can be cut in half or quarters to fit in a pocket for easy reference. A loose-leaf binder is useful as well, since additional pages can be added as needed.
2. Use this booklet to list alphabetically words which learners find difficult to spell or remember when they read. Definitions of new words can also be stored in the dictionary. Use various clues to identify the words – pictures, a sentence containing the word, etc.
3. Place other information on the cover pages – for example, upper and lower case letters, tricky script letters, word endings, punctuation reminders, etc.
4. Encourage learners to consult the booklet frequently when reading and writing.

Who will benefit from this activity?

All learners will benefit from this activity. Independence and confidence in reading and writing are the most noticeable benefits, although improved spelling is also possible.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Alphabetical order. People learn about the alphabet and alphabetical order.

Reading fluency is supported through the purposeful repetition of passages in the dictionary.

Writing confidence is developed as people build up the dictionary and can find the correct spelling of difficult words independently.

Organizational skills. Learners have to decide what information is essential to put in the dictionary and how this information should be organized for efficient use.

How to handle problems which may arise

Learners may make errors in spelling and alphabetical order when they put entries in the dictionary. All entries should be checked to ensure that correct spelling and alphabetical order are being reinforced.

Some people may take a great deal of time to enter words in the dictionary, but then not consult it while writing or reading. Encourage learners to keep their personal dictionary close by and use it while reading and writing.

Some beginning writers are concerned with perfection – especially perfect spelling and handwriting. Too much emphasis on the personal dictionary can lead to self-conscious reading and writing. This may discourage readers and writers at Level A and B from taking risks. In this case, tutors and instructors should encourage learners to use their personal dictionaries only at certain times during the session. Perhaps the personal dictionary should not be used until more writing confidence develops.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

When a page of the dictionary becomes full, learners can rewrite the entries in alphabetical order. A loose leaf binder is convenient at these times.

Pairs or small groups will benefit from sharing entries in the dictionary. Encourage learners to share with each other some of the techniques they use to remember difficult items.

Tips for Level A or B

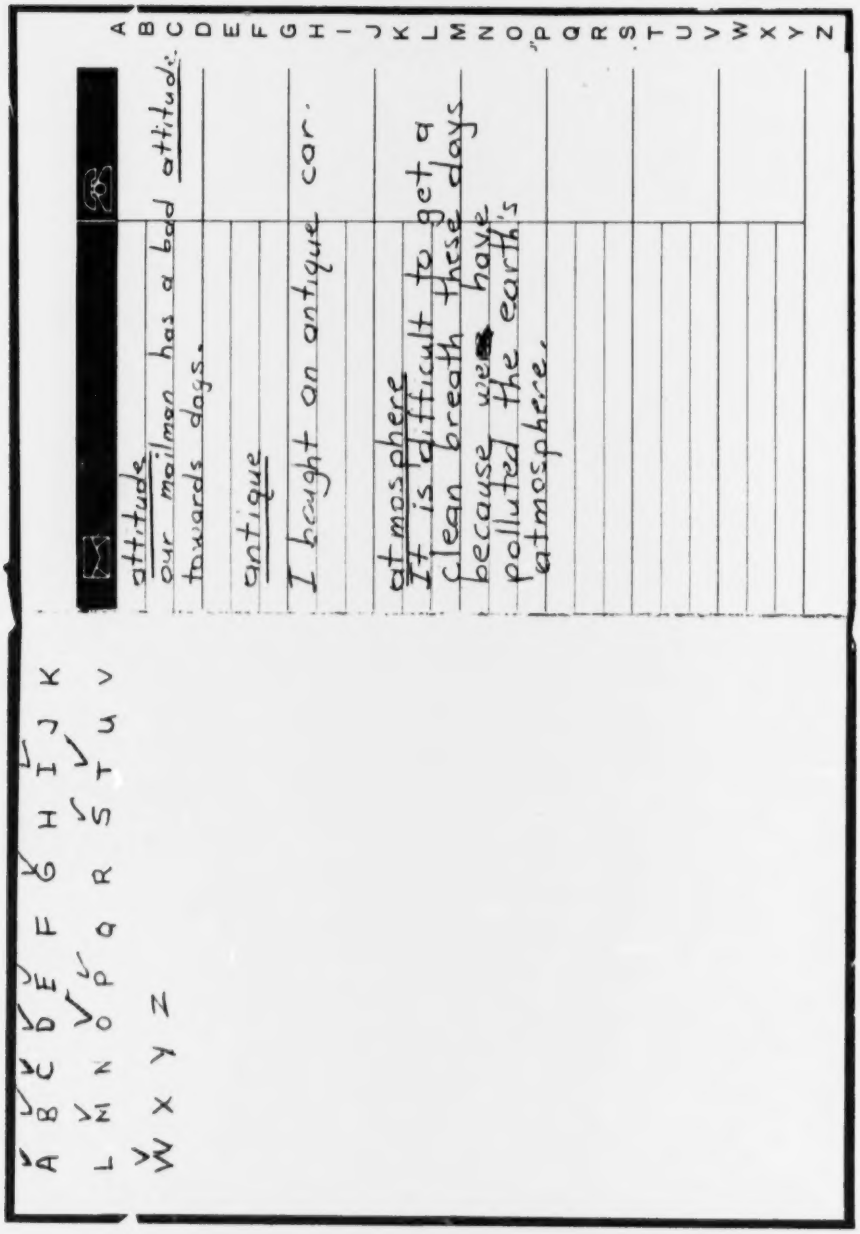
Use pictures to help beginning readers recall problematic entries in their personal dictionary.

Tips for Level C or D

Take time to look up entries in conventional dictionaries. This helps learners to gain an understanding of root words, word meanings and the history of words. Such an understanding might help learners look for patterns in language.

Personal Dictionary Sample:

Learners create personal dictionaries to store information that is difficult to remember. This could be words which are encountered when reading, new vocabulary or words which are difficult to spell. In this instance, the learner checked off the letters of the alphabet where entries had been made in the personal dictionary.


A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
attitude
our mailman has a bad attitude
towards dogs.
antique
I bought an antique car.
atmosphere
It is difficult to get a
clean breath these days
because we have
polluted the earth's
atmosphere.

Projects

Projects

Getting adults to read, write and talk about topics they really want or need to know is the most effective way to use upgrading time.

Projects are actually research undertakings on particular topics. Learning more about a topic of interest or one that learners need to know more about provides a great opportunity for integrating reading, writing and math work. Pulling these new skills together makes it easier to see how and where the skills can be used in everyday life.

1. Select the topic for project work. Projects may take some time to complete so learners should be encouraged to pick a topic which they really **want** to know more about (i.e. ecology, pet care) or a topic which they really **need** to know more about (i.e. worker health and safety manuals, drivers' manuals).

   Consider several options. Tutors and instructors can help learners pick a topic by referring to those that have surfaced during written conversations, language experience work, or simply in conversation.

2. Brainstorm the topic. This can be handled in a number of ways. See *Brainstorm* activities.

3. Turn the brainstorm into a chart. Take some or all of the headings from the brainstorm and list them down the page. See samples at the end of this section. A chart can be an effective way to organize the project and section the work into manageable portions. Learners can choose one heading from the chart and begin to focus on getting and organizing information about that heading.

4. Plan the project. Learners should do as much of the planning as possible. They should decide which heading is to be studied first and why. A tentative schedule can be drawn up and revised as necessary. This will provide good practice in managing time.

5. Decide what resources are available that would provide information about the various project headings. Consider using:

   - Books from the regional Literacy Resource Centre, local libraries and personal collections. Books which are too difficult for independent reading can be read chorally, read to learners, or rewritten in an easy-to-read style. Spend time discussing the material.
   - Pamphlets from government agencies, community organizations or businesses. Use the Yellow Pages to find where you can call or write for information. Then practice writing letters or telephoning for this information.

- Videos or movies relevant to the topic. Many libraries loan informative videos about a variety of topics. Videotape relevant TV shows or the news. Watch these videos together. Stop the tape where possible to discuss ideas and take notes.
- Anyone knowledgable about the topic. Learners develop writing and reading skills by writing interview questions and surveys. They also gain confidence by speaking to a variety of people from different walks of life.

6. As information is gathered, decide where and how it should be recorded on the chart. Some decisions will need to be made:
   - which heading the information belongs under or if new headings are required
   - how to include contrasting information from different sources about the same heading.

   Some people like to write their information on file cards. These cards can be moved around easily from one heading to another and can make organizing easier.

   There are going to be decisions every step of the way. Solving problems should be considered an important part of the learning process. Therefore, learners should be doing as much of the decision making as possible.
7. Use the chart to organize and write the first draft.
   - The information needs to be organized. The chart already contains information under a number of headings. This makes it easier because learners can simply rewrite the information recorded under each heading. Depending on how much information learners find and what level they are working at, the headings can be rewritten as a few sentences, in paragraph form, or as a section or chapter.
   - As learners rewrite the information from the chart, they need to consider what should come first, second, and so on. They can also compare how other authors wrote about the same topic. Even though these may not always be clearly organized texts, figuring out what they did can be useful. See *Text Organization* for more information about this idea.
8. Learners reread the rough drafts and ideas are added, deleted or rearranged as necessary. Other people may want to read the project at this stage to give learners feedback about the work and more changes may be made based on the feedback.

9. Learners look for spelling and punctuation errors.
    - Self-correction is the most useful first step.
    - If errors are missed, consider what are the most common errors the learners made. Discuss these errors with the learners and figure out ways they can avoid making them when writing the final draft. Encourage them to use their personal dictionaries. See Chapter 8 *Spelling* and Chapter 9 *Grammar* for more ideas.
10. People may decide to publish the finished project. This may take many forms. See *Publishing* activities for some ideas.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

All learners. If learners work on projects regularly, they will not only learn fluent reading and writing skills, but they will also improve their ability to think independently, organize information and ideas and manage independent study. Once they know how to do a project, they will be better prepared to tackle other topics. This does not happen overnight, however. Time, patience and consistency help.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Problem solving and decision making. Learners need to reflect on the information and ideas they are gathering. Many problems may be encountered during a project. These can range from choosing the topic to deciding whether the finished piece should be handwritten or typed. Learners have plenty of opportunities to make decisions and figure out if their decisions work.

Categorizing and organizing skills. Deciding what and why certain ideas belong together is a fundamental thinking skill. If learners are given the chance to make these decisions, they will develop important learning skills which can be applied to any situation.

Reading. Reading and rereading are built into this activity. Many notes and passages from books and other printed materials have to be reread in order for the next part of the project to be completed or the next idea added to the chart. This is an ideal situation to nurture fluency without making adults reread just for drill.

Writing. Learners develop writing skills throughout every phase of the project. They write brainstorms, charts, notes. They write messages from phone calls, interviews, and so on. And they write rough drafts and revised drafts.

Math if appropriate. For example, someone doing a project on purchasing a mobile home may need to learn about interest rates and percents.

Risk-taking and flexible thinking. Learners have to take risks when they make decisions about content and chart headings. They have to be flexible when they uncover new information that does not fit on the chart or information they do not agree with.

Confidence. Projects provide learners with positive feedback – starting from the beginning. Researching a topic of their choice reinforces the value of their interests. As decisions are made and accepted, learners gain confidence in their own abilities. Finished projects are opportunities for celebration and displays of pride.

Time management skills. Learners have to plan each phase of the project and stick to deadlines.

How to handle problems which may arise

Learners may want to switch gears and begin a new project before completing one that is already underway. One way to bring a project to an end is to write rough and final drafts for the categories already researched. If possible, learners should not walk away from something unfinished.

Scheduling projects with a group may be difficult. Regular group meetings to discuss progress can help to overcome this difficulty by involving the whole group in supporting individual or small group projects. Difficulties which may keep a project behind schedule can be considered and solutions offered. Tips for scheduling and keeping to a schedule can be discussed as well.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Work on short projects. Consider how much time is available and let learners go through the process – no matter how compact the project.

Work on projects "a step a day" to accommodate full timetables.

Get a small group or a few pairs to work on projects together. Decisions can then be made by the group and individuals can work on parts of the project. For example, one pair could find information and write the notes for one heading while another pair works on the other heading. The final product may be a book with short sections or chapters completed by different pairs or individuals.

Encourage people to assist each other while working on their own projects. Brainstorms can be shared and the group can meet regularly to find out how the projects are going, and what problems or successes people are having. The group can help each other to find resources and to solve any problems people may be having.

Publish finished projects together in a magazine or smaller booklets. Short projects may be included in a newsletter or photocopied and circulated for others to read. See the activity *Publishing* for more ideas.

Tips for Level A or B

Use choral reading and language experience to assist learners with the material. Tutors will need to record much of the information by using the *Language Experience* approach. There will be opportunities for learners to read these dictated texts independently and to participate in writing the project. Many materials may have to be read chorally.

Stay with one topic for a period of time. Beginning readers and writers have a better chance of improving their reading and writing skills if they can stay with one topic because the ideas and vocabulary are repeated at all stages of the project.

Assist learners in making decisions. Decision making can be difficult for people who do not like taking risks. Projects require a number of choices to be made and give learners at the basic level an opportunity to see the positive results of their selections.

Tips for Level C or D

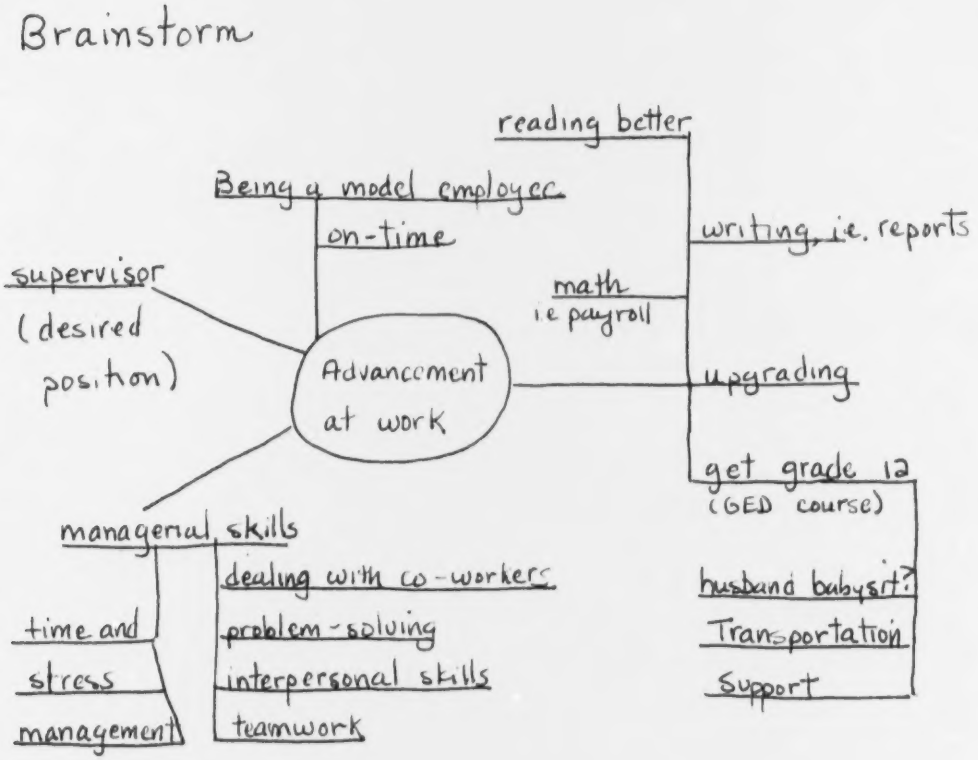
Help learners take notes. Note-taking can be difficult for people to do independently. Determining the most important ideas of an article, paragraph, chapter or book is not easy. Projects provide opportunities for people to recognize the main ideas and details from the material they are gathering. Brainstorming or mapping a piece that has been read helps people to see the main ideas and supporting details in a text.

Another way for learners to become more comfortable with note-taking is to provide small groups with the same short piece to read (part of a book or brief article). Ask them to pick out what they think are the important points by underlining them or using a highlighter pen. The groups can then discuss their choices.

Read difficult texts to learners. Project work often leads people to ask difficult questions and to want to read more complicated material for the answers. Often learners will bring in informative but difficult texts to read which are related to their topic. Tutors and instructors can help by reading the text to learners so that the learners can concentrate on the ideas.

Projects Sample #1 and #2:
Advancement at Work

This brainstorm was completed by a small group participating in a workplace upgrading program. The brainstorm helped the group record their ideas about the topic, *Advancement at Work*.



The following chart was completed using the brainstorm as a guide. The chart helped the group to organize their ideas, pose questions and make plans for exploring the topic further. Each member of the group picked a chart topic and brainstormed it further. The group then developed a rough draft based on the brainstorms and, after many revisions, wrote a small booklet on the topic, *Advancement at Work*.

Advancement at work	What I know	What I need to find out
Upgrading	I went through grade 9 in school	when GED courses are offered. Am I ready?
support	*I have a car to drive to class *My boss really wants me to get my grade 12.	Will my husband babysit while I take a GED course?
model employee	I am always on time people come to me for help	
supervisor	I have worked 11 years on the floor. I know my work well.	what added responsibilities there are
managerial skills	I manage time and stress well	How to deal with difficult people. more about teamwork.

Projects Sample #3:
Coal Mining – Pollution

This project was completed using language experience and choral reading techniques. These activities allowed the reader and writer to gather and organize information about a topic of real interest. The headings from a brainstorm were listed down the page similar to the chart form and information was placed under the appropriate heading. This process allowed the learner to read and reread the information with increased independence.

Coal mining – Pollution

WHAT IS COAL – Mineral that burns - gives lots of heat

where does it come from – under the ground
miles and miles.
harder coal - is deeper

USES – Furnace heat - Railroad TRAINS - power plants burn it for electricity.

STRIP MINING – Not As Good - BURNS FASTER

LOCATIONS - (IN EUROPE COMES GERMANY - ENGLAND)
IN NOVA SCOTIA - SPRINGHILL - GLACE BAY
NEW WATERFORD SYDNEY MINES

How TO GET AT - BORE A HOLE - DYNAMITE GOES IN SET OFF - LOAD IN PAN - GOES down INTO A BOX

PROBLEMS - COAL WAS A VERY IMPORTANT FUEL - ESPECIALLY DURING THE WAR - STEEL PLANTS could not have DONE WITHOUT IT.

FOR the miner - HEALTH - BREATHING COAL DUST CAUSED BLACK LUNG DISEASE

POLLUTION - coal is made up of chemicals when it burns ~~s~~ the chemicals go into the air - Pollutes the air CAUSES ACID RAIN. The rain FALLS AND THE CHEMICALS COME BACK IN THE RAIN. ~~A~~

OUR LAKES BECOME POLLOUTED

IF YOU LIVE near a coal Mine ~~THEIR~~ THE coal dust can get on your line clothes and your property

SOLUTION - coal USED LESS BECAUSE it IS So DIRTY.

STRIP MINING - BULLDOZE the dirt - blast coal destroyed the land

Projects Sample #4:
One Parent Families

This project, in first draft form, was started because the learner felt strongly that the difficulties of single parenting should be documented and that people should exchange information to support each other.

One parent families March 22
And How we can be much
best for our self.

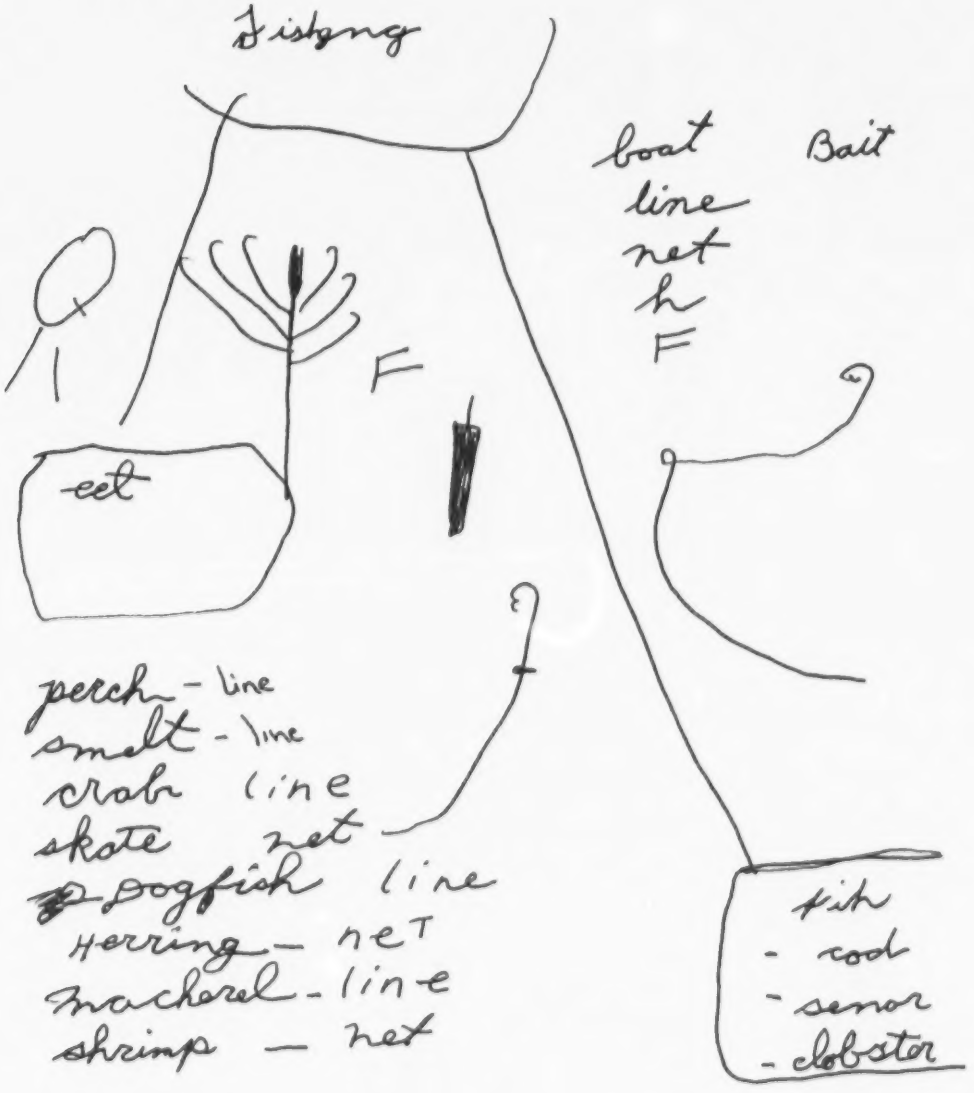
How can we get help to understand them
We can ask for help or we can try to wor.
thay out on our now.
However Sometimes asking for help from someon
doesnot always do Because they don
always know what to say or as about
handle stess.

How do one parent families
Deal with stress and how can thay get
help? We can ask for it.
Sometimes it gets to be too much
for our main and body so how do
we all deal with it
Each person reacts to stress in many
thay can put there feeling on paper.
or they can just sit down and cry
or anther way is to get mad at
our children.
Sometime I think that's where Child abus
comes from.
Because parents get so mad they take
out on ever thing in sight.

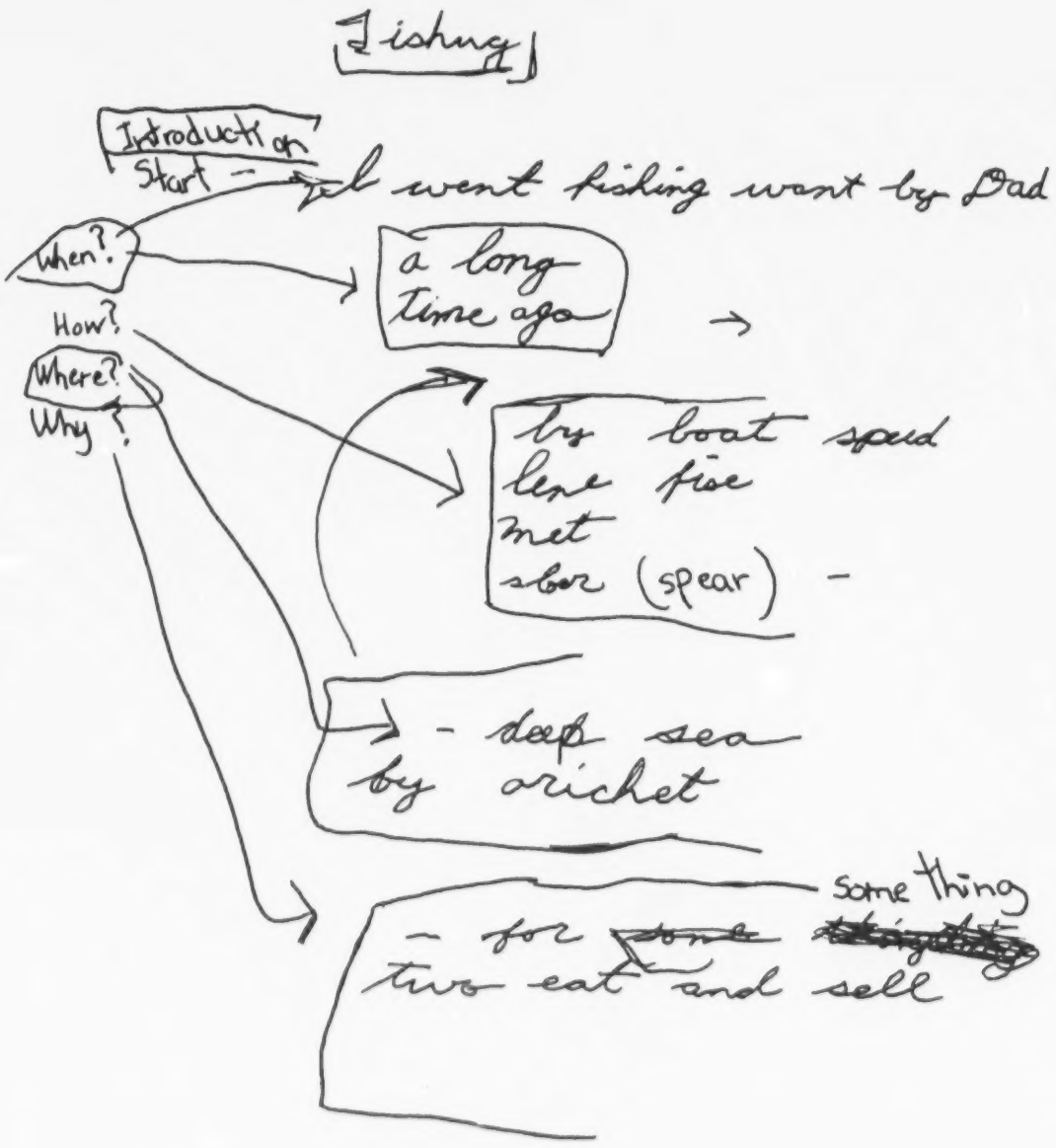
Projects Sample #5:
Fishing

This project was completed by a learner over a two-month period. Working with a tutor, the learner brainstormed the project three times, gradually narrowing and focussing the topic on the type of net fishing which he did with his father as a boy. The first draft of the story was written based on the final brainstorm. Corrections were made and a final version written.

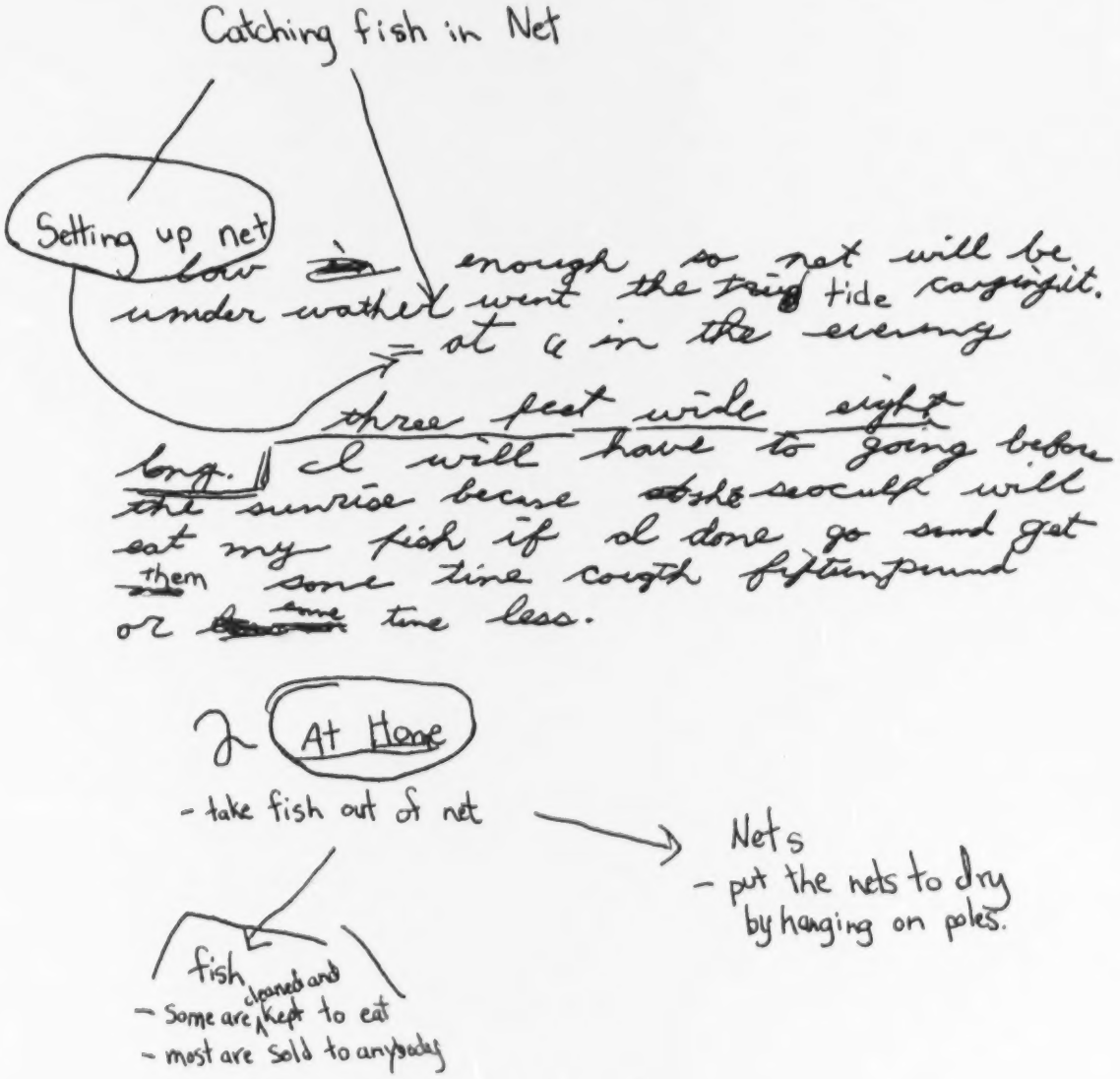
Fishing Brainstorm A



Fishing Brainstorm B

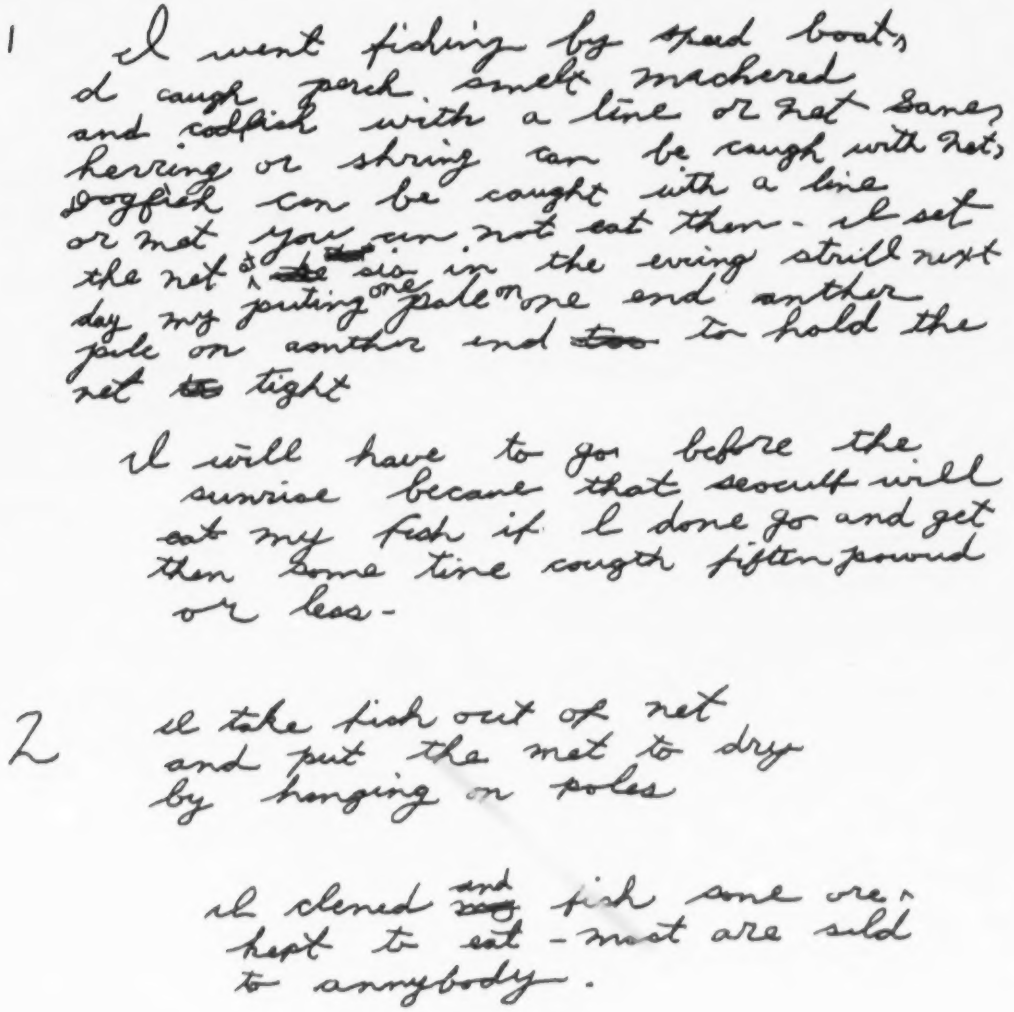


Fishing Brainstorm C


Catching fish in Net
Setting up net
low enough so net will be under water went the tide carry it.
at 4 in the evening
three feet wide eight long. I will have to going before the sunrise because seacult will eat my fish if I done go and get them some time cough fifteen pound or time less.
At Home
- take fish out of net
Nets
- put the nets to dry by hanging on poles.
fish cleaned and
- Some are kept to eat
- most are sold to anybody

Fishing Draft

The learner used the three brainstorms to write a rough draft.


I went fishing by speed boat,
I caugh perch smelt mackered
and codfish with a line or net Sames
herring or shrimp can be caugh with net,
Dogfish can be caught with a line
or net you can not eat them - I set
the net ~~I~~ ~~the~~ ~~sic~~ in the evning still next
day my putting ~~one~~ pole ~~on~~ one end another
pole on aonther end ~~too~~ to hold the
net ~~to~~ tight

I will have to go before the
sunrise becase that seocult will
eat my fish if I done go and get
then some time cought fiften powund
or less -

2 I take fish out of net
and put the net to dry
by hanging on poles

I clened ~~and~~ ~~cog~~ fish some are
kept to eat - most are sold
to anybody .

Fishing Final Draft

The learner revised the rough draft and wrote a final copy.

looking for fish

I used to go fishing with my father by speed boat. I caught perch, smelts mackerel and codfish with a line or net Some herring or shrimps could be caught with a line or net but you could not eat them. I set the nets at six in the evening until the next day by puting one pole on one end and another pole on the other end to hold the net tight.

I would go before the sunrise because the seagulls would eat my fish if I didnt go and get them I would take the fish out after. I got hare. I put the nets to dry by hanging them on a pole. I cleaned my own fish. Some are kept to eat most are sold to anybody that wants to buy them. Sometimes I caught fifty pounds or more.

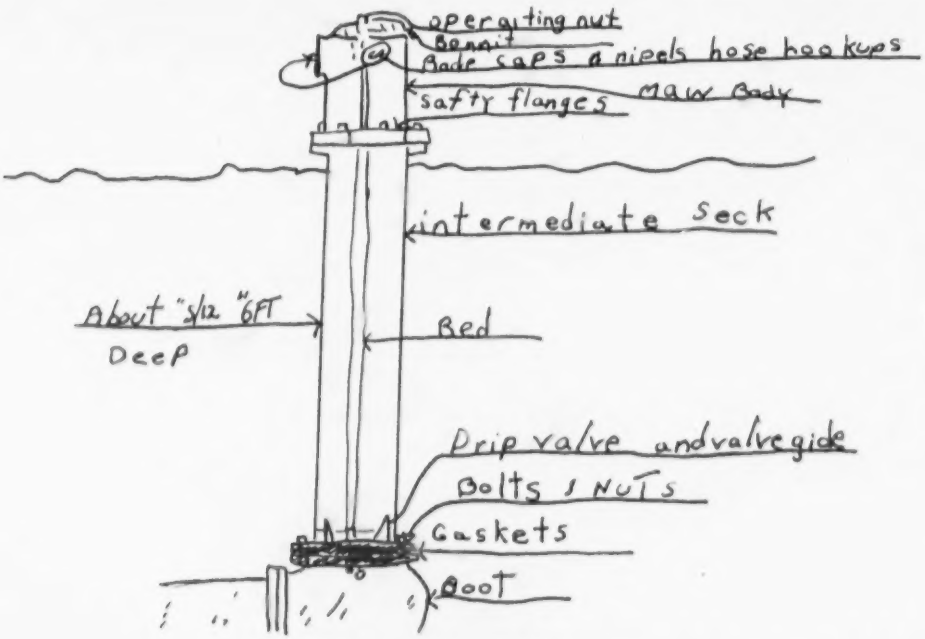
Projects Sample #6:
Hydrant

Projects are wonderful activities for organizing information about factual topics. This chart, diagram and final write-up were completed in a workplace program where learners gathered critical information about the machines and tools they used every day.

HYDRANT

M67 TYP

PARTS	MATERIAL	FUNCTION
Body & Caps	Cast	Covers nipels
Bonnit	Cast	Covers body
Operaiting nut	Brass	Opens the hydrant
Satty flanges	Cast	Brake off when hit
Intermediate Seck	Cast	Joins body & boot
Boot	Cast & Brass	Lets water in or out
Nipels	Brass	[redacted] hose hookup
Bolts & NUTS	Steel	hould it together
Gaskets	Ruber S Led	Stop it from Leeking



(1) PART

The main body of a hydrant is the part you see sticking out of the ground on the side of the street. Hydrants in dartmouth are red and silver or red and yellow depending om where they are.
An all red hydrant means it is om a seprit water systum from a red and silver and a red and yellow hydrants are om another systoom. The port of the hydrant you see is colled the barrat.
It is made up of brass cast iron stele bolts and rubor gaskets.
Its function is to put out fires and to flush the water systiom every year.

NOV 30 89

(2) PART

The intermediate sectiom of the hydrant is a port you dont see. It is barryed in the ground 5 to 6 feet deep. This port joins the barrel to the boot bellowe the frost line.
It is made of cast irom.

(3) PART

The boot of the hydrant lets water in or out. It lets water in when you want to yowse it and lets water out when your done with it. Its made of cast iron and brass parts to.

Projects Sample #7:
Documentation Summary

Groups can work on projects very successfully. This one-page documentation highlights how one project was organized in a group learning situation.

Documentation Summary

The fishermen's wives had experience in the fishing business. Yet, we had to be careful about confidentiality. This is a small community and income information had to be protected. We decided to create two imaginary fishermen. We made George a boat owner and Bill a sharesman. These men represented the members of the group – one participant is married to a boat owner and two participants are married to sharesmen. When we wanted to address a boat owner's concern, we gave George the problem. When it was a sharesman's problem, we wrote up the experience for Bill.

We tackled our study of the income tax guide this way. We wrote up problems that a boat owner or a sharesman might have and we consulted the tax guide for a solution. This way we had a problem that made sense to our experience. The class had experience in inventing the problem and writing about it. Then they had the experience of getting the information out of the tax guide that they needed to solve the problem. Finding the solution involved reading, math and problem solving.

As the project developed, we realized it would have been in order to create an imaginary fisherman's wife because we spent a lot of time discussing the issues that face the wives of fishermen. If time would have allowed we would have pursued this as it would have given the women more chances to write.

Publishing

Publishing

Why write if what is written is never shared or read by anyone else? A text published in a small flyer or newsletter or simply posted on the bulletin board may be just the catalyst needed to motivate adults to write.

1. Learners write several drafts of a text in which ideas are added, deleted and rearranged. Word processors are an easy and effective tool for this process.
2. Pieces are edited. Learners circle words they think are misspelled and punctuation marks which they are not sure about. See Chapters 7, 8 and 9 about making revisions to writing, spelling and grammar.
3. Other errors are discussed together. There is no point in editing the work without going through the changes with learners.
4. Learners type or rewrite their text for publishing. Word processors are useful for this, but are not necessary. Neat, clear printing works just as well.
5. Add pictures, illustrations, photos, diagrams, etc. where possible. Even colour photographs will photocopy well enough for this purpose.
6. In programs where learners meet on a regular basis, decisions about the publications can be made by learners. A publishing committee can be responsible for producing a regular newsletter full of short articles, word games, cloze passages, calendar notes, messages, etc.
7. Longer works may be developed into books. Authors should be responsible for decisions about the lay-out, pictures, cover, etc.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

All learners. This is an engaging activity for everyone. While some learners become more adept writers, others benefit from interesting, adult-oriented material written by peers. You can be sure that these materials get read. Everyone is curious about what their friends and peers have written.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Writing fluency skills. This activity follows the steps which fluent writers use. Learners have a chance to write for a real and satisfying purpose. Learners are pleased to be able to give back to others by writing something for a program newsletter.

Reading. Preparing a piece for publication requires a great deal of rereading. This can provide the kind of repetition which builds fluent reading skills.

Decision making and problem solving. Learners develop problem solving skills as they make decisions about their work. Many decisions require flexible thinking skills.

Confidence. Learners get a tremendous sense of "**I can** do it" by seeing their work published.

How to handle problems which may arise

Not every piece of writing needs to be published. Learners can keep a file of their writing and, from time to time, choose one piece which seems worthy of publishing. Criteria for choosing these texts could be determined during a group discussion or by an editing committee made up of learners.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

For longer pieces of writing, some learners find it useful to lay out the pictures and text in a photo album. These pictures and captions can be moved or changed as desired, and learners can see their writing look more like a book.

Newsletters are particularly successful in pulling programs or groups together. They can contain writing projects, columns about sports, TV or interests, questions and answers, photos and captions, learner-produced crosswords, word games, etc.

Tips for Level A and B

Use photos to illustrate parts of the text. New photos can be taken or older photos brought in. Captions can be written to tell the story. Pictures can also be cut from magazines and text added.

Tips for Level C and D

During the editing process, some parts of the texts may become difficult to edit. It is probably easier to rewrite these sections. If they are difficult to punctuate and edit, think about how difficult they are going to be to read.

Publishing Sample:
Van

The following pages illustrate how a tutor and student brainstormed, wrote and published a story.

Brainstorm. A young man who was hestitant about writing came into a session one day very excited and recounted how his father's van had been broken into over the weekend. His tutor started to brainstorm about the incident, recording the ideas brought up during discussion.

Van Story
Outline
VAN
Why?
→ people need money
→ think maybe it was someone rob home.
Hopefully get most of $
① What happened
- The van was broken into
② When
- Jan 24 - Wednesday night
We were working on the van tidying it up
We left at 9:00 p.m. My father went out and found it broken into.
(Between 9:00 - 7:30 am)
③ Where - Lakeside
↳ small car dealership
④ How Broke a side window (& pulled up lock and opened the door
⑤ What was taken
stereo / power booster
4 speakers
electric cooler
4 white spoked rims
one 10 inch rim / tire (back door)
even took the bracket
tools
jack
small air compressor
} kit
not even out of the case
utility toolet
4 fog lights
(two were unbolted off the front bumper!)
Camping stuff → Colman
stove (2 burner)
↳ Gas
Lantern
⑥ Threw out the big chair in the van
(dented the truck)
⑦ Police investigation - Dad called
- County - RCMP - said call insurance Co.
- haven't discovered a thing
⑧ Insurance Adjuster (2 days later)
- took pictures
- went through the van
- fill out insurance (make list) forms
* She first said (in the phone) that the van wasn't insured as a camper Van
Name / Price
Called Car Sound
$500 - stero booster
$3500.00 worth of stuff taken
⑨ → Hope the insurance covers this.
- Content
- Revise
- Edit - Punct.
- Spelling

Drafts. The learner wanted to have a written description of the incident for the insurance agent, so he used the brainstorm to begin a first draft.

Rough Draft No 1

Our Van was broken into on Jan 24. Wednesday night
We were working on the Van turning it and up, We left at 9 00 pm.
In between 9 pm 7:30 a m my father went out and found it broken
into in the morning at Lakeside at a small car dealership.
They broke a side window, pulled up the lock and opened the door
The stereo, power booster, 4 speakers, electric water
4 white & spoked rims one 10 on ~~front~~ rim and ~~tire~~ off the back
door even the bracket and they took tools jack small air
compressor utility tool set ~~for~~ fog lights two were unbolted
off the front bumber camping stuff colman stove 12 furner
Gas lantern and they threw out a big chair in the van
dented the truck

The police investigation county RCMP
came out to look it over and ~~he~~ said call insurance
Company the RCMP haven't discovered anything

The insurance Adjuster took pictures
went through the van fill out insurance forms
last name price called Car-sound for stereo which
is $5 00 the amount off stuff ~~to be~~ taken is worth $3500.00
hundred dollors Hope the insurance covers this
The adjuster took pictures of the license plate to show
it was a camper Van. Hope we will get it all.
People need money fast ~~to~~ to keep them
going think it maybe could be some one
out in Lakeside or out in that area

We have some money back from the insurance
company the ~~$~~ week that was half of the
money that coming to us There will be more coming
Yest.

Bye Lets Go Home Now.

Many changes were made, including making a list of the items stolen so that they would be easier to read. Notice how the learner has taken over the writing process and is concentrating on making changes to the content first. Spelling and grammar were edited after the content was finalized.

Rough Draft #2

~~The~~ our Van was broken into Wednesday night Jan 24 We were working on the Van tuning it up ~~.~~ We left the garage in Belgrade at 9:00 pm The next morning at 7:30 ~~as~~ my father discovered the van ~~had been~~ broken into vandalized during the night.

Someone had broken the side window, pulled up the lock and opened the door. The following had been taken:

- stereo
- power booster
- 4 speakers
- electric coolers
- 4 white spoked rims
- 1 10" rim and tire
- ~~a~~ spare tire bracket
- 2 tires with spoked rims
- tools
- jack
- air compressor
- utility toilet
- 4 fog lights off the front bumper
- 2 burner colman stove
- 2 lantern

They even threw out the big chair in the Van which hit and dented the Cab truck

Dad called the police They came out and after looking over the Van they said to call the insurance company

~~A~~ Two days later the insurance adjuster arrived ~~took~~ pictures and asked us to fill out insurance ~~forms~~ forms. ~~A~~ He estimated the total value of stuff taken at 3500.00 the adjuster take a picture of the license plates to show it was a camper Van.

One month and 3 days later we received the insurance money

He went through the Van

The learner typed up the piece so the information could be presented in an organized fashion for the insurance representative. The text was also published in the program newsletter.

Our Van was broken into Wednesday night, Jan. 24th. We had been working on the van during the day and we left the garage to go home around 9:00 pm. The next morning at 7:30 my father discovered that the van had been vandalized during the night.

Someone had broken the side window, pulled up the lock and opened the two side doors of the van. Dad discovered that the following was missing:

- stereo
- power booster
- 4 speakers
- electric cooler
- 4 white spoked rims
- one 10" rim and tire
- spare tire bracket
- tools
- jack
- air compressor
- utility toilet
- 4 fog lights off the front bumper
- two burner colman stove
- gas lantern

They even threw out the big chair in the van which hit and dented a company truck parked nearby.

Dad called the police. They came out and after looking over the van they said to call the insurance company.

Two days later the insurance adjuster arrived. He went through the van, took some pictures and asked us to fill out some insurance forms. He estimated the total value of stuff taken at $3500.00. The adjuster also took a picture of the license plates to prove that it was a camper van.

One month and three days later we received the insurance money.

Reports And Forms

Reports and Forms

Learners may want or need to prepare reports or fill out forms for work, for applying for a loan, or for requesting information. Tutors and instructors may want to collect a variety of forms which can be used when the need or interest arises.

1. Select a form and brainstorm the kind of information which is asked on it.
2. Photocopy the form and practice filling in the information. Consider what information is required and the amount of space allowed for it.
3. Record any difficult words in a personal dictionary. Information generally useful for forms, such as dates of previous work experiences, grades completed, etc., may also be put in the personal dictionary for easy reference.
4. Job application forms may not ask the questions which bring out certain skills, positive experiences and background information. Learners should consider how these attributes can be included on the form provided.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

Learners who are looking for jobs, working at jobs where reports or forms are required, or writing reports in their daily lives may want to spend time doing this kind of work at every session.

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Reading. Reading forms requires specific reading strategies since prediction is not always a helpful tool in this instance. Usually, there is not enough information to use context cues to help learners understand the text. Learners need to develop a sight vocabulary and be able to predict the kind of information which will be asked on the form. These are the main reading skills which are more difficult for those at the basic reading level.

Writing. Filling out forms and reports requires concise, accurate writing skills and learners need to approach forms in a different way than they are encouraged to write at other times. Learners need to predict what kinds of information are required and practice filling in different forms to become as familiar and comfortable as possible with form writing.

How to handle problems which may arise

Some forms are vague or difficult to read. While it may not occur to you or the learners, a fair amount of discussion may be needed to interpret these forms. You should not insist that filling out forms be a completely independent activity until there has been adequate practice.

Learners may seem overly anxious about correctly filling out forms because this will be seen as their route to getting employment, being accepted in a training program, advancing in their workplace, etc. Regular practice can lessen this concern.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Small groups can fill out forms together. People may find this sharing and group problem solving activity more enjoyable and just as effective. Some may discover that this is an excellent way to pick up tips from each other.

Pairs can share forms that they have used as well as their concerns about certain forms through a program newsletter or on a bulletin board.

Many people are concerned about the difficult format and language of forms, especially forms used for social assistance recipients, in legal situations, at UIC offices, and so on. Rewriting and simplifying these forms is the activity of plain language or clear language and design groups. Learners may want to contact a group in their area to find out about this work. Some learners may want to rewrite the forms as a project and share their ideas with other tutor pairs or groups in the program or class.

Tips for Level A and B

Beginning readers and writers should practice identifying some of the main words and phrases on simple forms they will fill out. Name, address, telephone number, and work experience, for example, may be written on separate pieces of paper and matched with other strips containing the correct information.

Learners can scan a variety of simple forms to find the places where certain kinds of information are required. For example, look at a number of different forms and ask, "Where would you put your name? address? telephone number? etc."

Tips for Level C and D

Groups can compare forms and discuss why some are easier and others harder to fill out. It is reassuring for learners to realize that poorly laid out forms, rather than their own literacy skills, may be the reason they do not understand the information on the form.

In order to prepare reports with well organized main ideas, learners may need to practice note-taking. There is no easy way to become accomplished at this, but examples and discussion help. You should provide learners with examples of how others have prepared reports and how you would do it. After that provide opportunities for practice. Short, but regular practice sessions are more effective than long, draining ones.

Report Writing Sample:
Hospitality Report

This woman had worked hard on a community committee for years. With her tutor's assistance, she wrote the following report. Her pride and feeling of accomplishment were increased by the positive feedback and respect she received from her fellow committee members.

January 15

Hospitality Report

Modern, Present ladies of our Group. I am the reporting cheer person for our hospitality Groupe. For the tea and sale, we had december 2. We had a very good turn out, Even though we got started late. Because of the storm, I wou like to give a special thankes to all the ladies who helped out in the kitchen, getting things ready. I would like to thank the lody who gave there donations, the money we took in was for the plates was $1.08. In closing I would like to say it would be nice the next time we have a social tea if all the ladys would try and come.

Reported By
hostlatby cheer
person.

Text Organization

Text Organization

Text organization is a brainstorm done in reverse. Using the same process as outlined in *Brainstorm,* learners and tutors work together to figure out how other writers organize their writing. This can be done with any length of text, from a paragraph to an entire book or newspaper. This activity enables a text to be unravelled so that the author's ideas can be revealed and examined.

Follow these steps:

1. Read the whole article or text to get an idea of what the story is about.
2. Reread the text slowly, a portion at a time – the first column, paragraph or sentence.
3. Write the central idea/theme in the middle of the page.
4. Make notes around this theme by writing down the supporting ideas and the details.
5. Discuss the text considering:
   - what information the author included
   - what information the author left out
   - what bias is expressed.
6. If people like the text and feel that it is well written, they may want to try writing a story based on the same format. If people feel that the text leaves out information and is hard to follow or poorly organized, they may want to rewrite the story adding what they feel should be included. For example, after a choral reading of a newspaper article, a group discussed what they felt the author was saying. After much discussion they felt confident enough to write about the topic.

   "All she said in the first three columns was what she thought the problem was, then she described the possible solutions and finally, in the last column, she told us what she thinks should be done about it. We can do that too. We'll write one paragraph about each area."

Who will benefit from this activity?

Hesitant writers will appreciate figuring out how other writers have put their texts together. They will realize that putting ideas together in an organized fashion is not complicated – it just takes careful thought.

Prolific but disorganized writers. People who write a page of rambling thoughts will develop some effective models for putting their ideas together.

Learners who are developing critical thinking skills. This process will encourage them to challenge the texts that they read. Where did the author get the information? From what perspective was the piece written and for what audience? What ideas were not included?

What strategies and skills are being developed?

Categorizing skills. Learners recognize how different kinds of reading material are organized. They can use these models to become more confident and effective writers.

Critical thinking skills. Learning how other writers state and defend their opinions may help to express their own ideas effectively.

Note-taking skills. Brainstorming to record what has been read is a valuable tool for any reader. This skill can be particularly useful for people who feel that they do not remember or understand what they read.

Organizational skills. Many learners are so frustrated by print that they have given up trying to make sense of it. This activity asks people to look for patterns and organization in the material they read.

How to handle problems which may arise

People may have difficulty recognizing what kinds of information have been left out of a text. It may be helpful to compare two or more texts on the same topic. A story about a current event, for example, could be compared using articles from different newspapers or magazines.

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Use a brainstorm to map out how entire newspapers, magazines or books are organized. If you are working in a program with other learners, give different sections of a newspaper to small groups or pairs of learners. Ask them to figure out what is in their section and be prepared to share it with the group. They will use the brainstorm to record their ideas.

In large group discussion, develop one brainstorm on the chalkboard or flip chart to pull all the ideas together.

Tips for Level A or B

Use this activity to help writers at the basic level develop composing and organizational skills.

Use the language experience approach to assist learners to record their ideas.

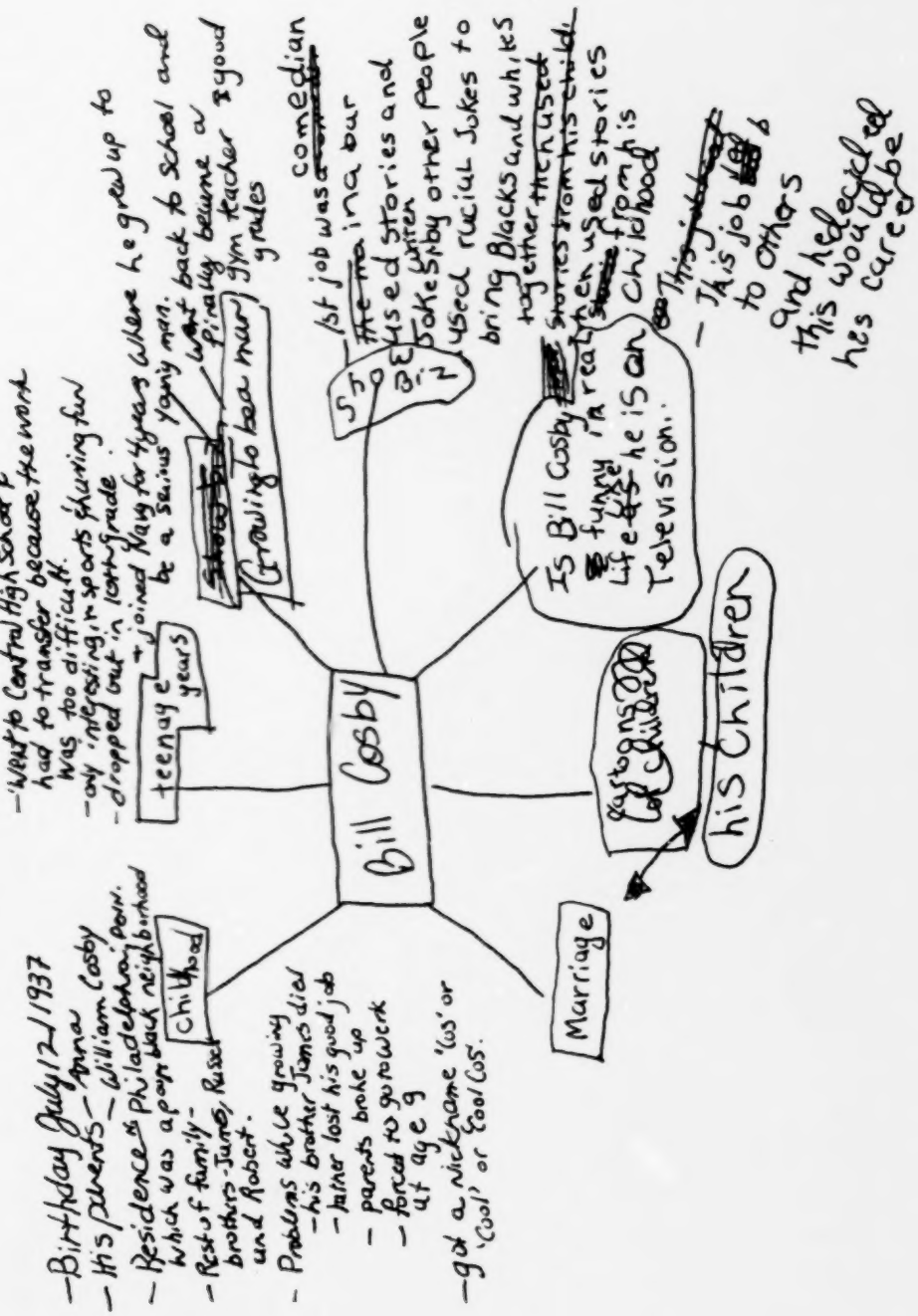
Tips for Level C or D

Compare stories which the learner has written at different times to show how writing organization has improved.

Use text organization as a way for learners to take notes.

Text Organization Sample:
Bill Cosby

Books, articles and paragraphs can be mapped out to discover how the author organized the text. This brainstorm was based on a short biography of Bill Cosby. This process helps learners who are trying to improve their comprehension, note-taking and study skills.


Bill Cosby
Childhood
-Birthday July 12, 1937
-His parents - Anna & William Cosby
- Residence: Philadelphia; poor, black neighborhood which was a part of family - brothers: James, Russell and Robert.
- Problems while growing
-his brother James died
- father lost his good job
- parents broke up
- forced to go to work at age 9
-got a nickname 'Cos' or 'Cool' or Cool Cos.
teenage years
-went to Central High School & had to transfer because the work was too difficult.
-only interesting in sports during fun
-dropped out in 10th grade.
-joined Navy for 4 years where he grew up to be a serious young man.
-went back to school and finally became a gym teacher & good (crowd) to be more
grades
comedian
1st job was
the main bar
Stories and
Recused
Bill Cosby Written
Spoke/Spoken other people
Used racial jokes to
bring Blacks and whites
together the housed
stories from his child-
hood
Is Bill Cosby
a funny
Life
Television.
he is an
stories from his
Childhood
This
- It's job
to others
and helped
this would help
he's career be
Marriage
Parenting
of Children
his Children

Written Conversation

Written Conversation

Have a conversation on paper. This is a perfect activity to begin each session.

Follow these steps:

1. Write a question that you might ask in everyday conversation.
   - use printing if script is difficult to read.
   - try to avoid questions which can be answered with 'yes' or 'no' or with a one word answer.
2. Learners then write a reply. Remember:
   - it may be easier to talk before writing.
   - perfection is not necessary. Expecting perfect spelling or handwriting at this time may take the fun and usefulness out of this ice-breaker activty.
3. Carry on the conversation, taking turns asking and answering questions.

Who will benefit the most from this activity?

Very hesitant writers.

People who like to talk. Support their need to share ideas while working on reading and writing skills.

People with lots of responsibilities and full schedules. This activitiy allows them to relax and prepare for an effective learning session.

People at all levels A through D. Everyone enjoys this personal, direct activity and can gain a great deal by watching tutors write.

What strategies are being developed?

Reading.

Thinking and communicating.

Writing to communicate directly to someone else.

Fluent reading and writing skills. Modelling these skills is important since these are rarely demonstrated in front of adult learners. Take time to explain the decisions you make while you write and how you came to these decisions.

How to handle problems which may arise

1. If there are words which learners do not know how to spell, try the following suggestions:
   - Encourage learners to write the word based upon the sounds (phonics) or the way they think that the word looks (graphic cue). Have them put down as many letters as possible.
   - Encourage learners to make a quick guess so that the ideas are not forgotten.
   - Encourage learners to leave a blank space for letters or words and to continue writing the rest of the ideas down.
   - Use the correct spelling for the word when it is your turn to ask or answer a question. This will reinforce correct spelling without making people feel embarrassed.
   - Wait and see if the learner notices and uses your correct spelling. Depending upon the confidence of the individual, you may want to draw his/her attention to this spelling. Words that are misspelled may be included in a personal dictionary.
2. If there is a great deal of hesitancy:
   - offer assistance in writing it down
   - help people focus on what they want to say
3. Parts that are difficult for learners to read independently should be read chorally.
4. If the activity seems dry:
   - vary the questions
   - inject some humorous responses
   - encourage the learner to ask the questions

In what other ways can this activity be used with groups and one-to-one?

Peers can have conversations together. Hesitant writers should be matched with more confident writers.

Small groups may work together asking and answering questions. Pairs can exchange questions with other pairs or small groups.

One instructor may work with a number of learners by responding to questions one at a time. This is more useful for learners working at the C and D levels who are writing more independently.

Conversations may be used to understand the problems and constraints people may be facing everyday. The issues raised can be developed further through discussions or project work.

Conversations may go around the table rather than back and forth between two people. This encourages people to read. Everyone is curious about what other people wrote and what questions were asked.

Publish a written conversation in a newsletter. Other learners will be curious. Use this question and answer format to do interviews and record and publish other people's opinions.

Tips for Level A and B

Begin with questions like, "My name is _____. What is your name? I live in _____. Where do you live?" Similar questions may be asked about family members, place of work, etc. These basic questions build confidence and provide examples about how words look and how writing can begin.

Talk out loud as you write. Explain sounds, letters, the use of capitals, spacing, etc. Make sure that learners sit on your left if you are right-handed and on your right if you are left-handed so that they can see what and how you are writing.

Stay with the same topic (ideally initiated by learners) during the written conversation. Words are more apt to be repeated and this makes reading and writing easier.

Phrase questions and answers in a similar way. This makes it easier to predict and therefore easier to read. Use complete but easy-to-follow sentences. (eg. start with the subject: The new fishing quotas were announced yesterday. What do you think about them? **not** – Announced in the news yesterday were the new fishing quotas.)

Tips for Level C and D

Ask questions which require a thoughtful exchange of ideas. Written conversations allow you to give immediate feedback and support so that ideas can be nurtured and developed. Many learners at this level benefit from seeing how you express your ideas and how you back up your opinions. Take time to explain what decisions you make when you write and how you come to these decisions.

Decide on an opening question for the written conversation before your next session. This gives learners something to think about between sessions and can get the conversation off to an easy start.

Written Conversation Sample #1:

Written conversation allowed this tutor and learner to get to know each other in an informal way.

What did you do on the weekend?

I like like all the leades on the weekend.?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TEAM WON THE WORLD SERIES BALL GAME ?

no I dont know I never watch the game

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LIKE ?

i like d Guitar playing.
guitar

Written Conversation Sample #2:

The tutor and learner caught up on what each had been doing using written conversation. In this sample, the dialogue at the beginning of the session allowed the learner to set out what he wanted to accomplish that day.

I am learning how to run a power saw so I can cut the trees - some need to be cleared - some I will make into lumber. What have you been doing since last time?

Well el been ~~both~~ work hard. ~~and at~~ ~~to~~ Do you injoy cut wood? Are ~~you~~ ~~re~~ ~~ee~~ ~~get~~ ~~teke~~ some ~~words~~ word out of my book so you can gave me a spell tast the next time I see yo q. I still need to find a book to read

Written Conversation Sample #3:

In this written conversation, the learner took charge of asking questions, making suggestions, and giving advice to the tutor. It is clear that there was a fair exchange of ideas between tutor and learner and a supportive relationship here. Notice how the tutor starts to write in script, but is reminded that printing is easier for this learner to read and consequently switches to writing in print.

You say you have been busy.
What have you been doing?
I have been working ~~so~~ really hard.
I did not get a lot ~~of~~ sleep since the last
time I saw you. I had a ~~birthday~~ birthday. I was
~~pretty~~ drunk ~~drunk~~ on the weekend. How are you?
~~When was your birthday~~ When was your birthday? Did you
celebrate with friends? I am a little
disappointed - I had thought I had
made it rich on my tax return - but
had mis calculated - my birthday was on
Sunday. The a old friend went to the
place. I got drunk and fell a sp sleep
in the bar. How mad did you get back.
I here that there changed the tax kick back
this yera and it is hard to get back ur
money because of the new G.S.T. I hope I
get back some money. ~~to~~ Do we like
prince